



WELCOME

to this 8th edition of the **SAI** | Newsletter!

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We are more than happy to introduce Prof. Rahul Mukherji, who will join the SAI in summer 2016 and take over the Chair of Political Science as successor of Prof. Subrata Mitra. Prof. Mukherji's last posting before coming to Heidelberg has been with the National University of Singapore. We look forward to having this internationally well-known scholar among us and cannot wait to his valuable contributions to the further developments at the SAI. Also well-known to the readers of this newsletter is Prof. Axel Michaels, who has received two prestigious prizes that we are proud to report – the Höffmann-Research Prize for Intercultural Competence (University of Vechta) and the Lautenschläger Research Prize (Heidelberg University). Finally we are looking forward to the arrival of Prof. P. Sahadevan from the Centre for South Asian Studies, JNU, whose stay as a DAAD guest professor is scheduled for the summer term 2016.

Due to the size of this newsletter – with 34 pages it surpasses all previous numbers – we cannot but hint at the numerous contents you will find inside. They range from the introduction of a new MA course Communication, Literature and Media in Modern South Asian Languages to news from the library (e.g. start of FID or Fachinformationsdienst Südasien), from reports on research in such diverse fields as environmental change, water resource management, documents from pre-modern South Asia to recent developments in our branch offices New Delhi and Kathmandu and last but not least six pages of news on “people” that is all those personalities that shape (or had shaped) the life and work at the SAI as well as recent publications which demonstrate the thriving intellectual life at the Institute.

SOUTH ASIA INSTITUTE

Im Neuenheimer Feld 330
69120 Heidelberg
T: +49-6221-54 89 00
F: +49-6221-54 49 98
M: info@sai.uni-heidelberg.de
www.sai.uni-heidelberg.de

Dr. Martin Gieselmann
Executive Secretary

Prof. Dr. Stefan Klonner
Executive Director



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- New Home for SAI/HCSA Branch Office in New Delhi
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- SAI HelpNepal on International Photofestival
- New in CrossAsia - the Naval Kishore Press Bibliography
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Prof. Dr. Michaels received the Lautenschläger Research Prize



Rahul Mukherji - New Head of the Department of Political Science



Jivanta Schöttli as Interim Professor



Obituary for U Tin Htway

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PROF. DR. MICHAELS RECEIVED THE LAUTENSCHLÄGER RESEARCH PRIZE

Source: Heidelberg University

Prof. Dr. Axel Michaels, head of the department of Cultural and Religious History of South Asia at the South Asia Institute and director of the Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context", received the Lautenschläger Research Prize endowed with 250,000 euros. The honour is bestowed on an "internationally recognised research personality who is the embodiment of outstanding achievement in research," explained Dr. h.c. Manfred Lautenschläger, the award's sponsor and honorary senator of Heidelberg University. In his work on the cultural and religious history of South Asia, Axel Michaels combines text studies and ethnographic research in a unique way, and thus established a new area of research known as "Ethno-Indology". The award ceremony for the most highly endowed research prize from a private sponsor in Germany was held on 4 December 2015.



The Lautenschläger Research Prize is awarded every two years for special accomplishments in leading-edge research. The distinction is intended to honour scientists from Heidelberg University as well as other national and international researchers with special ties to Ruperto Carola through scientific cooperation. Entrepreneur Manfred Lautenschläger established the award in 2001 to foster active researchers in the discovery process. An interdisciplinary board of internationally networked scientists selects the potential prize recipients, who can be nominated for the Lautenschläger Research Prize from any discipline.

Prof. Michaels' research is focused on the practice and history of Hinduism in India and the religions of Nepal, in particular rituals and festivals. His work also includes the study of sacred maps and religious geography of Benares as well as Hindu asceticism. The laws of ancient India and legal literature of pre-modern Nepal are other areas of interest. From 2002 to 2013, Prof. Michaels served as spokesperson for the "Ritual Dynamics" Collaborative Research Centre, which he was instrumental in founding. The researcher has been a member of the directorate of the Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context" since 2007, and is acting director of the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies (HCTS) founded at Ruperto Carola in 2013. He also directs the "Documents on the History of Religion and Law of Pre-modern Nepal" research unit of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

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PROFESSOR RAHUL MUKHERJI - NEW HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

The South Asia Institute is pleased to announce that Professor Rahul Mukherji will succeed Prof. Subrata K. Mitra at the Department of Political Science starting in June 2016.

Subrata K. Mitra was Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science at the South Asia Institute from September 1994 to 2014.

Rahul Mukherji has been an Associate Professor in the South Asian Studies Programme located within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore, since 2008. He is also Honorary Senior Fellow of the Institute of South Asian Studies and has served as Head of Research of the institute in recent times.

He completed in 1999 his Ph.D. at the Department of Political Science at Columbia University, New York. His dissertation focused on "A Path to Trade and Investment Liberalization." Prior to his Ph.D. he graduated at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi.

Rahul Mukherji maintained a lively interest in the political and economic aspects of development working on India's economic transition to globalization and market orientation, the welfare of its citizens and the delivery of public services and South Asian regionalism. His research demonstrates that development is a political and economic process. The political and economic aspects of development are so deeply intertwined that they cannot easily be separated from each other. He has a deep interest in comparative work on South Asia, the rest of Asia and other parts of world.

He taught at the Hunter College of the City University of New York between 1996 and 1998; at the University of Vermont in 1999; and the Jawaharlal Nehru University between 2003 and 2008. His teaching areas are globalization, political economy, development, foreign economic relations, India, South Asia.

He has also edited India's Economic Transition (Oxford University Press, 2007) and co-authored India Since 1980 (Cambridge University Press, 2011) with Sumit Ganguly. His most recent books are the Oxford India Short Introduction to The Political Economy of Reforms in India (2014) and Globalization and Deregulation: Ideas, Interests and Institutional Change in India (Oxford University Press, 2014). He is editorially associated with journals such as India Review, Pacific Affairs and International Studies Review.



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NEW HOME FOR SAI/HCSA BRANCH OFFICE IN NEW DELHI

On December 16th, 2015 Heidelberg Centre South Asia moved into its new headquarters at the German House for Research and Innovation, 2, Nyaya Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi, Delhi 110021.

Heidelberg Centre South Asia (HCSA) functions as a branch office of the South Asia Institute (SAI), the Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context" and of Heidelberg University in New Delhi, India. HCSA is also part of the "Deutsches Wissenschafts- und InnovationsHaus" (DWIH, the German House for Research and Innovation) - a joint endeavor of the Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research to intensify international cooperation. HCSA shares the building with other DWIH consortium partners such as DFG, Freie Universität Berlin, University of Cologne, ForschungsZentrum Jülich, Max-Planck-Gesellschaft and Indo-German Chamber of Commerce.



FID ASIENWISSENSCHAFTEN STARTED

by Nicole Merkel-Hilf

As already reported in the last SAI newsletter in the short notice "From SSG to FID?" the South Asia Institute, the University Library of Heidelberg and the Berlin State Library had collaboratively submitted a proposal for a "Fachinformationsdienst Asien" to the German Research Foundation (DFG). The "question mark" can now be replaced by an "exclamation mark" since the DFG has approved our proposal. For the coming three years the three institutions will – in close exchange with the scientific community – build up new information services for Asian Studies. These will be accessible via the portal CrossAsia. The University Library and the South Asia Institute are responsible for South Asia, while the Berlin State Library is in charge of East Asia, Central Asia and South East Asia.

Our focus remains on collection building with print as well as electronic materials based on current trends in research as well as the wishes and needs of researchers. By developing better search and order options user will have quicker access to relevant material (print, electronic or open access). Another emphasis will be on developing the three Open Access platforms CrossAsia-Repository, CrossAsia Journals and CrossAsia Books further by implementing additional functions such as high quality Print-on-Demand options or annotation tools. See the press release by the DFG from 21.12.2015 as also the article by Nicole Merkel-Hilf: Ausbau des asienwissenschaftlichen Informationsangebots – CrossAsia –Fachinformationsdienst Asien geht an den Start" published in Südasiens-Chronik.

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SAI HELPNEPAL ON INTERNATIONAL PHOTOFESTIVAL

by Christiane Brosius

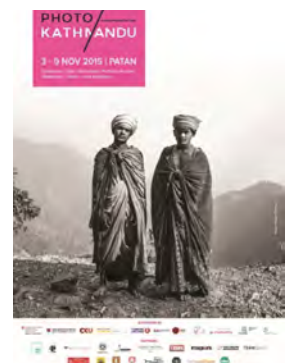
From the 3rd-9th November, the first international photography festival in Nepal took place, where SAI Help Nepal contributed with the exhibition “Patis in Patan”. The project was conducted by Prof. Christiane Brosius (Professor of Visual and Media Anthropology, Heidelberg University), the artist and curator Sujan Chitrakar and the researchers Rajendra Shakya and Dikshya Karki.

One of the most unique and yet sidelined sites in contemporary urban Nepal are the pati (Newari: phalcha). There is no other space that is as public, dynamic and available for multiple use, and for a variety of social groups, as this arcaded platform. As the nodal points of Newar culture, patis have a meandering history, often undergoing many architectural and social changes. Many also have a daily rhythm that invites use by different local groups. It is a ritual-site, a site for gatherings and leisure, used as shelter, shop or storage. But it is also a site that has been closed down or off, and silently vanished. After the earthquake, it has been seemingly rediscovered as a supportive institution, a much-needed island of momentary relief and solidarity.

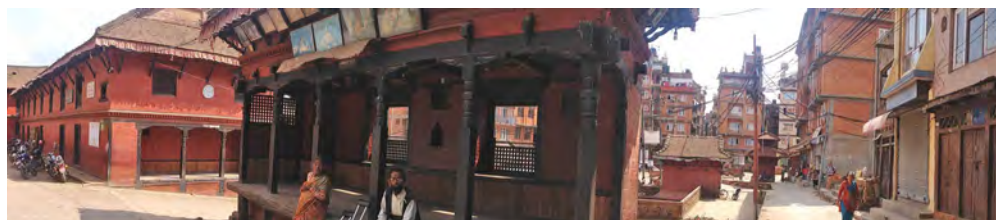
With this curated walk, we wanted to include, and allow the viewer to see through, the eyes of local groups, of elderly senior citizens and youth, unfolding a panorama of the city’s past, present and possible future. A future that considers intangible and tangible heritage as a central element of post-earthquake Kathmandu.

Several patis have been selected as entry-points into these time-lapse excursions. Based on joint research, and supported by local communities and students from Kathmandu University, Brosius, Chitrakar and Shakya have developed visual, spatial and audio narratives for the sites. The patis form a curated walk through Lalitpur, and cover a fascinating range of everyday culture captured in personal histories and memorabilia, collective memories and religious practices, filled with photographs and conversations.

Patis in Patan is part of a larger and long-term collaborative initiative including members of Heidelberg University, Kathmandu University and KVPT. It aims at facilitating and nurturing knowledge about the rich cultural practices of urban Nepal for research and teaching.



Posters of the exhibition



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NEW IN CROSSASIA - THE NAVAL KISHORE PRESS BIBLIOGRAPHY

by Nicole Merkel-Hilf

The Naval Kishore Press was founded in Lakhnau in 1858 by Munshi Naval Kishore (1836-1895) and grew in the following decades to one of India's most important publishing houses. During Naval Kishore's lifetime the press published c. 5.000 titles covering literature in Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit on subject as diverse as religion, education, medicine, school-books, translations of English classics, etc.

The Library of the South Asia Institute at Heidelberg University holds with its 1.316 titles issued by the Naval Kishore Press (742 titles on microfilm) a representative cross section of the Press' publications.

The "Naval Kishore Press Bibliographie" serves as a bibliographic database for records of books and journals published by the Naval Kishore Press and aims to provide access to bibliographic records of titles that are distributed in libraries worldwide. The bibliography is still under construction and contains currently c. 1.360 entries.



NEW IN CROSSASIA JOURNALS - ELECTRONIC JOURNAL OF VEDIC STUDIES

by Nicole Merkel-Hilf

The journal Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies (EJVS), edited by Professor Michael Witzel, Harvard University, publishes research contributions in the field of Vedic studies since 1995. The EJVS was designed as an open access journal from the beginning and was hosted on the homepage of Professor Witzel.

In agreement with the publisher, the journal was "moved" to CrossAsia Journals in order to improve the long-term archiving, the citation by allocation of DOIs and the search options. Currently the Heidelberg server offers the years 2011-2015. In the next weeks, the years to 1995 will also be accessible online.

The project is implemented in the context of the DFG funded project "CrossAsia - Fachinformationsdienst Asien" and is part of the Heidelberg focus on "Electronic publishing in Open Access".



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RESUMPTION OF LECTURE SERIES AT THE KATHMANDU OFFICE

by Nadine Plachta

After a temporary disruption due to the earthquakes that hit Nepal in April and May 2015 the lecture series of the South Asia Institute's Kathmandu Office started again in September. The lectures series provides a forum for local and visiting scholars to present their work and interact with the larger public.

Davide Torri, Postdoctoral Researcher at the Cluster Asia and Europe at the Karl Jaspers Centre for Advanced Transcultural Studies, reopened the event with the presentation "On Shamanism: A Brief Introduction." Torri explored the concept of shamanism, which is a much-debated term in anthropology and religious studies, and highlighted how the word has been used to describe several religious phenomena from different contexts: from Siberia, where the word was first used and registered, to South America; from Finland to Australia; from indigenous traditional healers to western neo-Shamans; from cave art to the Internet. "But what exactly is a shaman?" Davide Torri asked. The talk focused on some of the main characteristics, ideas, and recurrent themes usually associated with it. Torri also portrayed current research findings from Nepal, especially from the Helambu region.

In January, Michelle Grocke talked on "The Health Impacts of the First Road in Humla District." The medical anthropologist from the University of Montana explained how the first road to ever be built into Humla has connected this once-remote Himalayan region to a market in China. She drew attention to villagers now purchasing almost all of their household goods and much of their food from across the border due to easy accessibility and low costs. During the presentation she discussed the health impacts—specifically in regard to villagers' food security, nutritional status, and well-being—that have come as a result of this road development. Preliminary results of Grocke's research indicate that most villagers perceive their current food security as being significantly higher than in years past, as the road is being utilized to increase both food stocks and dietary diversity. These caloric gains, however, are coming at a steep price. Nutrient composition analysis illustrates that abrupt increases of sugar and trans-fat consumption from these 'new', market-purchased foods has led to a decrease in nutrient density, and a consequential heightened risk of diabetes and high blood pressure. Michelle Grocke's data also suggest that there is a high level of variability in nutritional status both among and within villages based on factors such as socio-economic status, gender, and age. In her presentation, she examined how new market access, afforded by the new road, impacts villagers' health, and assessed which segment(s) of the population are experiencing negative biological health outcomes as a consequence of this rapid environmental change. Michelle Grocke gathered data for this study during 10 months of ethnographic research in 2014/15.

The lecture series now takes place irregularly, considering that normal life in Kathmandu has at times almost come to a standstill due to the unofficial economic blockade caused by agitating Madeshis with the support of the Indian government in response to the new constitution. The next lecture will be in March, with a talk on the Arun-3 and Melamchi hydropower projects by Matthäus Rest from the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. The SAI Kathmandu Office Lecture Series are held at Yalamaya Kendra, Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur.

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NEW MASTER OF ARTS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF MODERN SOUTH ASIAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

The Department Modern South Asian Languages and Literatures offers a new master degree program starting with winter semester 2015/16.

The M.A. in Communication, Literature, and Media in Modern South Asian languages focuses on the study of languages, literature, and various



media discourses (texts, manuscripts, movies, internet and audio sources) in Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, and Tamil.

Two variants of the course are offered. One option aims to advance skills in two already acquired languages, while the other offers the possibility to start with a new language

in addition to an already learnt one. During the programme, students will engage with books, magazines, newspapers, audio-visual materials, and academic literature in the languages offered by the department. In addition the students will be introduced to methods of text analysis, literary studies, religious studies, and cultural theory. With an in-depth understanding of topics related to the South Asian region, graduates from the M.A. programme are qualified to enter a number of professions, such as cultural and media related occupations, translation, cross-cultural training, scientific research management, and similar fields. The M.A. enables graduates to enrol in subsequent PhD programmes. It is scheduled over four semesters and is a full time study programme.

SAI-STUDENTS WON ESSAY WRITING COMPETITION

by Gautam Liu

Two students of the department of Modern South Asian Languages and Literatures, Samantha Kanna and Rebecca Hadank-Rauch (picture: third and fourth from right), have won the first and second places respectively in an Essay Writing Competition in Hindi organized by the Embassy of India, Berlin to commemorate the World Hindi Day on January 11, 2016. The topic of their essays was: My favourite Indian festival. The awardees were honoured for their language skills in Hindi and asked to read out their essays in the Indian Embassy.



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SOUTH ASIA INSTITUTE'S GRADUATION CEREMONY 2015

On December 11th, 2015, the South Asia Institute's annual graduation ceremony was held in the Heinrich Zimmer reading room in the SAI library. The hall was full of family, friends and faculty members who had come to celebrate with the graduates. Many graduates returned to SAI to be honoured.

The ceremony was opened by Dr. Martin Gieselmann, SAI's Executive Secretary, welcoming the graduates, their family and friends, the faculty, and all other guests. Prof. Dr. Axel Micheals, head of the Cultural and Religious History in South Asia department, conducted the ceremonial lecture that followed the opening address. The lecture was entitled "Die Geschichte der Erdbeben in Nepal" and gave an overview of the history of earthquakes in Nepal.

After this Prof. Dr. Stefan Klonner handed over the degree certificates to each graduate in turn. The graduates also received a small gift which included a poem in Hindi and Urdu written exclusively for the graduates by our Hindi lecturer Gautam Liu. Throughout the evening the speeches were interspersed with classical and modern Indian dance performances by Swarali Paranjape (PhD student at SAI). The ceremony was concluded by graduate Adrian Seeger who gave the students' final words. After the ceremony there was a champagne reception held coinciding with the SAI winter party allowing everybody a chance to relax. The Ceremony was organised by the Registrar Dr. Lars Stöwesand, Betony Laybourne and Melani Aloysius.



Photo: Lars Stöwesand

The graduates of the South Asia Institute and Executive Director Prof. Stefan Klonner (on the picture left)

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TWO PAKISTANI RESEARCH SCHOLARS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF MODERN SOUTH ASIAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

by Christina Oesterheld

In 2015, two doctoral candidates from Pakistan joined the department financed by a scholarship of the the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan.

Mr. Muhammad Tariq Ilyas Dogar joined the South Asia Institute on the 21st April 2015. He is working on a PhD project titled "A Critical Study and Research of Elements of Tragedy in Modern Urdu Poetry. A Special Study of Noon Meem Rashid, Majeed Amjad and Faiz Ahmed Faiz" at the Department of Urdu, International Islamic University Islamabad. During his stay in Heidelberg he studied theoretical literature on the aesthetics and rhetoric of tragedy, contributed a session to an MA course on modern Urdu poetry and presented parts of his thesis in the department's research colloquium. In addition to working on his own subject he also looked at several rare Urdu manuscripts and early prints in libraries of Heidelberg and Madrid to explore opportunities for critical editions and research.



Naqeeb Ahmad Jan and Christina Oesterheld on the SAI excursion

Mr Naqeeb Ahmad Jan from the University of Peshawar arrived in Heidelberg on the 28th August 2015. His research deals with a critical assessment of translations from Pashto into Urdu commissioned by the Pashto Academy, Peshawar. Through our university library he gained access to a wealth of material on translation studies which is not available in Pakistan

which will prove very useful in formulating the theoretical foundation of his thesis. He gave a presentation on his home region, the Swat Valley, in the department and offered instruction on Urdu calligraphy to the participants of our beginners' course in Urdu. On the request of the German Red Cross/Landesverband Sachsen he provided Pashto captions for pictograms to be used in reception centers for refugees and revised the badly translated Urdu versions.

Both guests joined us on many occasions, such in the SAI outing, at guest lectures and visits to the canteen. In October 2015 they also travelled to Istanbul in October to take part in an International Urdu Conference celebrating the 100th anniversary of Istanbul University's Urdu Department.

In the last week of January our Pa-

kistani guests returned to their home country taking with them fond memories of Heidelberg and the South Asia Institute.



Tariq Ilyas and Christina Oesterheld on the SAI excursion

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STUDENT INFORMATION DAY

On the 18th November Heidelberg University hosted the annual Open Day for prospective bachelor students. The event was very well attended with around 4000 students coming.

Photo: Susanne Schmidt



Bernhardt Beitelmaier and Vinojan Vijeyaranjan at the information stand

SAI ran a stand from 9:00 to 16:00 advertising the Institute and the study programmes on offer. At the stand, prospective students could also enjoy a warm cup of chai that was made by SAI's Student Union for the event. During the afternoon, SAI had a 45 minute slot in which to present the Institute. Dr. Roman Seiler and Rafael Klöber gave a talk entitled "To Study at the SAI". This was followed by two students, Hannah Bley and Hinkel Günkel, sharing their experiences.

FIRST SEMESTER INTRODUCTION AND MASTER BRUNCH

This year's First Semester Introduction was held on the 6th and the 7th of October, 2015 for the Bachelors students. It began with a breakfast, organised by the Student Union, for all students, new and old, giving them a chance to get to know each other. This was followed on the first day with a general introduction to the Institute, the course of study and a presentation of the languages taught at SAI.

On the second day, each department gave a presentation to the students giving an overview of the faculty and the courses on offer in the winter semester. The programme was concluded with a pub crawl organised by the Student Union in the Altstadt.

For the Masters students a brunch was organised on Thursday 29th October. This was a great opportunity for all the master students to get to know each other outside of classes. There was a large variety of food on offer; cakes, bread, fruit and much more. A lot of students attended and enjoyed the food and lively conversation.



Photo: Melani Aloysious

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GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE IN THE HIMALAYAN REGION: CONTROVERSIES, IMPACTS, FUTURES

by Radu Carciumaru

Heidelberg University, jointly with Freie Universität Berlin and in partnership with TERI University, organized a three-day international conference on “Global environmental change in the Himalayan Region: Controversies, Impacts, Futures” between November 6 and 8 at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. The conference was a part of the regular activities organized by the German House for Research and Innovation (DWIH) in India and brought together scholars, researchers and practitioners from diverse disciplines to share their findings and exchange ideas on this multidimensional topic. It offered an opportunity to establish sustainable research networks, produce joint publications and conduct collective fieldwork and covered a wide range of topics from analysing historical records of climate change, remote sensing of environmental change, socio-hydrology and changes in the cryosphere to direct and indirect impacts of climate change, human development in the Himalayan region and so on.

The conference was inaugurated on November 6 by Professor Marcus Nüsser, Chair, Geography Department, South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University with a keynote on Environmental Changes on a Himalayan Scale. The keynote was based on extensive fieldwork and a series of historical and repeat photographs from different Himalayan regions. The conference was attended by over 150 scholars, not only from India and Germany, but also from Nepal, Bhutan, Japan, Australia and France.

Parallel to the conference, HCSA organized a unique exhibition on “repeat terrestrial photography” that identifies changes of glaciers, vegetation, land use and urban development in the Himalayan region. Under the title ‘Environmental Change on a Himalayan scale’ it consisted of photographs by Professor Marcus Nüsser. The exhibition took place at Open Palm Court Gallery, India Habitat Centre, between November 06 and 09. “Repeat terrestrial photography” technique has made visual comparison possible, to identify changes in the glaciers and patterns of vegetation, land use and urban development. Bi-temporal comparisons between historical photographs, paintings, maps and repeated photographs; satellite imagery and topographic maps, demonstrated these changes in the Nanga Parbat area, north-western Himalayas, through Ladakh and Nepal to Sikkim.

The exhibition had an overwhelming resonance and will be shown in 2016 at other locations in India (e.g., Jamia Millia Islamia and Delhi University) as well as in Nepal and Pakistan.



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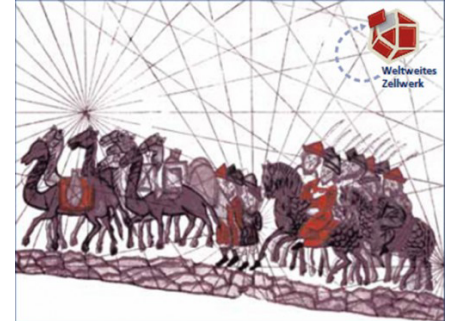
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CONFERENCE ON “GEMSTONES IN THE FIRST MILLENNIUM AD. MINES, TRADE, WORKSHOPS AND SYMBOLISM”

by Kerstin Sobkowiak

The BMBF-funded research-project on early medieval gemstone jewellery “Weltweites Zellwerk / International Framework” organized an international conference, which was held at the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum in Mainz between the 20th and 22nd October 2015. It brought together researchers from the fields of archaeology, art history and philology as well as from the field of archaeometry.



The conference sought to explore the different aspects of ancient gemstones, their manufacture, their trade as well as their usage and their meaning by highlighting the respective facet in one of three sessions. The first session “Mines and Trade” focused on historical maritime and continental trade connections as well as the present-day organization of mines. Borayin Larios, a former member of the project “Garnet in South Asia: Historical and archaeological sources” situated at the South Asia Institute, gave a presentation about “Elusive gemstone mines: The red garnet industry in contemporary Rajasthan” including video footage from his research trip in Rajasthan. The papers of the second session “Gemstone Working” highlighted the production and the techniques of medieval gemstone workshops in Africa and Europe. The third and concluding session shed light on a further, non-operational aspect of precious and semi-precious stones by addressing “The Value and the Symbolic Meaning(s) of Gemstones”. Jörg Gengnagel chaired this session, Kerstin Sobkowiak gave an introduction and a summary.

Each session contributed to fruitful and inspiring interdisciplinary exchange between the participating researchers. The lectures were recorded and the respective audio-files as well as the presentations and posters can be accessed via the project-blog at <http://zellwerk.hypotheses.org/>. Additionally, all papers will be included in the forthcoming conference proceedings.



Photo: Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Mainz / S. Steidl

Participants of the International Conference

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STUDYING DOCUMENTS IN PRE-MODERN SOUTH ASIA AND BEYOND: PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES

by Simon Cubelic

Around thirty scholars met at the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities from 4-6 October 2015 to discuss recent research on documents of pre-modern South Asia. The conference was organized by the Research Unit “Documents on Religion and Law of Pre-modern Nepal” which has been conducted by the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities since 2014.

One of the main objectives of the conference was to contextualize the increasing production of documents during Nepal’s “long twentieth century”, i.e. the Śāha and Rāṇā periods, within pre-modern South Asian administrative and legal cultures. Twenty presentations grouped in six panels ranged thematically from indigenous traditions of Nepalese historiography, the legal, ritual and religious practices of 19th century Nepal, deeds and diplomatics of different pre-modern South Asian regional cultures to digital methods of European diplomatics and archival research. Furthermore, archival experts from Nepal and Switzerland reported about the situation of archives in Nepal after the earthquake, the implications of archival practices for community identities and recent developments in digital archival infrastructures. Speakers included among others Diwakar Acharya (Kyoto), Monika Boehm-Tettelbach (Heidelberg), Polly O’Hanlon (Oxford), Timothy Lubin (Lexington) and Alexander von Rospatt (Berkeley). The conference proceedings will be published by Universitätsverlag Winter in the series “Akademiekonferenzen”.



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SUSTAINABLE WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: PERSPECTIVE FROM EUROPE AND SOUTH ASIA

by Radu Carciumaru

Heidelberg University jointly with Free University Berlin and in partnership with TERI University and Kashmir University organized a two day event on “Sustainable Water Resource Management: Perspective from Europe and South Asia”, which took place between September 28-29, at the German House for Research and Innovation, DWIH, New Delhi.

The conference aimed to explore the Indo-German research collaboration project activities with involvement of various stakeholders, including government officials and key policy-makers, research scholars and academia, NGOs, grass root level implementers, among others. Representation of such diverse group in the workshop paved the way for highly productive discussions and deliberations within the group.

The workshop started with a welcoming address by Dr. Vaibhav Agarwal, Senior Scientific Officer, DFG India, which was followed by Dr. Amita Prasad (Joint Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources), who shared the statistics on water availability. Ms. Annett Baessler (Counsellor, Economic and Environmental Affairs, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany) welcomed the participants with positive information on parallel ongoing negotiations between the Indian and German governments, and informed them that among various issues being deliberated in the bilateral, water resources management is also an integral part of the agenda. Thus, the workshop is very aptly placed in this context. The opening session was followed by the keynote address of one of India’s leading experts Professor Dr. Shakil Romshoo (Head, Department of Geography, University of Kashmir), who spoke on ‘Upper Indus Basin under change’.

In a working, knowledge transfer-oriented environment that bridges science, policy and practice, the participants presented their work, initiatives and ideas, exchanged their views and approaches, and jointly sought for commonalities

and innovative solutions to secure a sustainable and efficient water resource management. The presentations covered various aspects of water resource management such as decentralized approaches to water management, ground water management and regulation, IT-based solutions to water management, public-private partnerships, aquaculture and transboundary water resources cooperation, to name just a few. The workshop proceedings were recorded by rapporteurs provided by TERI University (the Coca Cola Department of Regional Water Studies) and its findings were presented to a boarder interested public in a panel discussion format, the following day. The report of the workshop is finalized, will be published and circulated to all relevant institutions both in India and Germany during the first quarter of 2016.



Organizing Team of the Workshop

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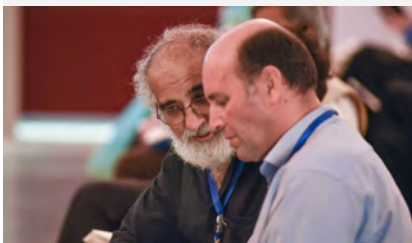
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INDO-GERMAN DIALOG ON EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

by Radu Carciumaru

The first symposium in the series Indo-German Dialogue on Excellence in Research and Education took place on 14 October 2015 at the German Embassy and focussed on ‘Internationalisation as a Key Impulse for Excellence in Research and Education’. It was organized by DAAD in cooperation with Freie Universität Berlin, Universität Heidelberg, University of Cologne and TUM, and funded by the DWIH. After a welcome speech by Ms Heike Mock, Director, German Academic Exchange Service – DAAD Regional Office New Delhi, the event was inaugurated by the German Ambassador Dr. Martin Ney. The keynote address was delivered by the renowned expert Dr Allan E Goodman, President and Chief Executive Office of the Institute of International Education (IIE). The inaugural session was followed by three expert Indo-German panels, which addressed the audience with themes like Creating Structures of Academic Governance, Promoting International Mobility- Inbound and Outbound and Institutionalising Cooperations and Networks- Alumni Groups and Research Clusters. Heidelberg University was represented by Dr. Martin Gieselmann (South Asia Institute), who together with Professor Dr. Dhruv Raina (JNU) spoke on “Institutionalising Co-operations and Networks - Alumni Groups and Research Clusters”. Their joint presentation was moderated by Professor Dr. Amita Chandra from the Delhi University and was followed by a lively Q&A session. The second symposium took place on the 20th of November 2015 at the Goethe-Institut/ Max Mueller Bhavan, Bangalore. The theme for the half-day event was ‘Industry Academia Cooperation as a Key Impulse for Excellence’. After the welcome speeches by Mr Christoph Bertrams, Director, Goethe-Institut and Ms Heike Mock, Director, German Academic Exchange Service – DAAD Regional Office New Delhi, the event was inaugurated by the Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany to Bengaluru Mr Jörn Rohde. Mr Hubert Reilard, President of the Indo-German Chamber of Commerce delivered a special address. The keynote was delivered by the Deputy General Manager, Mercedes-Benz Research and Development India, Dr Anshuman Awasthi. Heidelberg University was represented by Dr. Sigurd Weinreich (Head - Research, Department of Industry Cooperation and Technology Transfer), who spoke on “Challenges and Success Factors for Industry-Academia Collaboration”. This unique form of Indo-German exchange aimed at bringing together Indian and German decision makers and leading experts in the education sector, to discuss the multifaceted and all-encompassing aspects of excellence in teaching and research, to exchange ideas and experiences with regard to the challenges and opportunities and to identify areas of mutual interest. Due to the overwhelming positive feedback, both from the organizers as well as participants, Heidelberg University, jointly with DAAD and other partners is considering institutionalizing this form of interaction and exchange and co-organizing such events in other Indian cities.



Dr. Sigurd Weinreich - (Head - Research, Department of Industry Cooperation and Technology Transfer)

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SCIENTIFICATION AND SCIENTISM IN THE HUMANITIES

by Kaushiki Das and Purbasha Mazumdar (JNU)

The International Conference “Scientification and Scientism in the Humanities” on 25th and 26th November 2015 inaugurated a stimulating dialogue between the sciences and the social science disciplines. A project of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Freie Universität Berlin, Heidelberg University and Manipal University, the symposium raised the question about the devaluation of the humanities and the misuse of the concept of science.

Sundar Sarukkai’s contributed with his paper, “How Science itself Challenges Scientism”, he looked at how the ideals of science are breached in practice. Christoph Wulf’s paper, “Dominance of Scientific Knowledge and the Devaluation of Other Forms of Knowledge”, focused on practical knowledge, body knowledge and tacit knowledge; devalued with the rise of Enlightenment mode of thinking. Anand Samir Chopra’s paper, “The science in Āyurveda – forming contemporary Āyurveda between modern science and traditional knowledge” elucidated how Ayurveda practitioners had reacted to modern medicine, to legitimize their medical system. Harish Naraindas’s paper, “Techno-sacramentalism. Magic, religion and science in German medicine” dealt with the denial of aetiologies like metaphysical beings in modern medicine. V. Sujatha’s paper, “Food: A numerical value. Understanding nutrition and body weight in the global South and North” looked at the multiple meanings and perceptions attached to food by ‘laypersons’ (farmers, women, Dalits) compared to ‘experts’ (economists). Susan Visvanathan’s paper, “Thinking about agriculture in an industrializing economy”, looked at how local people’s future is often made contingent on the scientist’s vision, enforced by the state, through the case of organic farming. Daniel Munster’s paper, “After the agrarian crisis: alternative agronomies of natural farming in South India” focussed on how the issue of food sovereignty has become linked with a right-wing environment. Anand Mishra’s paper, “Sanskrit and computer science” investigated the claims that the Ashtadhyayi, a grammatical system developed by Panini, can be a computer programme. Axel Michaels’ paper, “Mathematics and Vedic Mathematics” examined the claim of Vedic Mathematics to be a science sanctioned by the Veda. Franson Manjali’s paper, “Modernity, colonialism and the emergence of a scientific approach in language studies” looked at how scientism has made language a crude scientific activity and the need for a language of sensation. Jan Houben’s paper, “The Art of Grammar: “science”, human interest, and the construction of cultural and political worlds” stated that like the ancient grammarians, the social sciences must strive to identify underlying stable elements. Babu Thaliath’s paper, “The Scientism of Early Modernity and the prevailing scholastic discourse on principium individuationis”, posits that mechanical philosophy can be seen as the foremost attempt at scientism in Western philosophy. William Sax’s paper, “The Birth of the (Exorcism) Clinic: medicine, media and the jinn”, dealt with exorcism clinics that presents us with a case of the traditional being re-clothed in a modern garb.

The final deliberations focused on the need for the social sciences to stop emulating non-contextual, formalistic science; the need to enlarge the scope of science; the material, institutional arrangements required to ensure hybridity; and its viability.

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FIELDWORK FOR HERA FUNDED PROJECT SINGLE IN DELHI

by Lucie Bernroider

As part of the HERA (Humanities in the European Research Area) funded project “SINGLE - Creating the ‘new Asian woman’: entanglements of urban space, cultural encounters and gendered identities in Shanghai and Delhi” helmed by Professor Christiane Brosius, PhD candidate Lucie Bernroider is in the final stages of her fieldwork in Delhi. She traces single women’s pursuits of belonging and an independent lifestyle in India’s rapidly changing capital city. The study is particularly interested in the way gendered identities and concepts of inner city life are negotiated among a growing and diversifying urban middle-class. In-depth qualitative interviews with a narrative approach explore the potentialities as well as the challenges associated with a life outside of the trajectory of heteronormative, coupled biographies. Ethnographic methods such as participatory observation and walk-alongs meanwhile help examine informants’ unfolding affective relationship to an urban landscape that offers few culturally validated spaces for alternative forms of living. Analysis of women’s access to the city in specific localities in South Delhi further questions notions of confinement and sanitisation of public space which currently underwrite discourses of women’s safety in urban India.

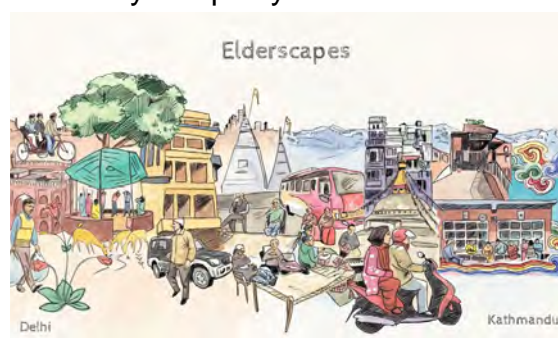


ELDERSCAPES. AGEING IN URBAN SOUTH ASIA

by Annika Mayer

In cooperation with filmmaker Jakob Gross, Annika Mayer and Roberta Mandoki have developed the transmedia project ‘Elderscapes. Ageing in Urban South Asia’. It covers various aspects of ageing in urban environments focusing on the social commitment of older persons, their everyday life and social bonding, on their memories as well as perspectives on what it means to grow old in a city. Older people show their city and their activities from their own view and reflect on the changes they have witnessed. The heterogeneity of experiencing older age can individually be explored along different topical lines.

The non-linear transmedia format supports the illustration of very diverse experiences since it allows including a larger amount of different material than a linear documentary. ‘Elderscapes. Ageing in Urban South Asia’ is part of the research project Ageing in a Transcultural Perspective at the Cluster of Excellence Asia and Europe in a Global Context, Heidelberg University. It is partly based on the PhD research of Annika Mayer in Delhi,



India, and Roberta Mandoki in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. The transmedia project will be launched on January 27, 2016 with a talk by Annika Mayer and Roberta Mandoki at the Karl Jaspers Centre, Room 212, at 4 pm. Website: www.uni-heidelberg/elderscapes

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SINGLE WOMEN IN THE CITY: WORKSHOP IN DELHI

Christiane Brosius co-organised an international workshop entitled “Solocities: Representations of the ‘Single’ in Urban Spaces” in New Delhi from October 6-8, 2015. It was part of the HERA (Humanities in the European Research Area) funded project ‘SINGLE’ and hosted in conjunction with the Max Mueller Bhavan/Goethe Institut New Delhi. The idea behind this was that as cultural contact zones, cities throughout Asia are shaping and being shaped by global, regional and national flows that are implicated in the unravelling of ‘traditional’ social contracts. New forms of economic production, migration, and a growing leisure and consumer society, for example, are said to erode institutions such as ‘the family’. The ‘single’ woman has come to signify cultural change, demanding recognition and access to the city, as well as re-versioning what concepts such as ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ mean. Singleness can stem from various acts of stepping outside the ‘family’. The idea of singleness is increasingly visible within the media landscape that acts not only as a mirror but as a catalyst for its emergence. This international workshop sought to interrogate this contested notion of singleness in the city, focusing on Delhi and Shanghai. Through presentations, panel discussions, performance and film screenings, it highlighted that gendered imaginaries of emancipation are contested in the light of a variety of cultural practices that impact the multiple life-worlds of women and cities that invite, produce and restrict singleness. Findings from the HERA project were presented as well as ongoing collaboration with artists and academic colleagues from Delhi, Mumbai, Shanghai or Hong Kong. The international SINGLE project is headed by Prof. Christiane Brosius, Chair of Visual and Media Anthropology in Heidelberg, Dr. Melissa Butcher (London), Prof. Jeroen de Kloet (Amsterdam), and coordinated by Laila Abu-Er-Rub. Keynote speakers were Sanjay Srivastava (JNU Delhi), with a talk on „Technotopias, consumer cultures and the meaning of ‘single’”, Lucetta KAM Yip Lo (Hong Kong) on „Queer Mobility of Chinese ‘Single’ Women” and Gillian Rose (Open University, UK) on “Seeing the City in Digital Times: Photography, Network, Method”. Two public events evolved around film screenings and the representation of women in cities through the medium of film, such as the screening of “Where’s Sandra?” by Paromita Vohra (18 mins, 2005), with input statements and discussion by the filmmaker as well as short presentations by Ranjani Mazumdar (JNU Delhi), Aparajita De (DU, Delhi). Moreover, the public evening entitled “Shorts in the City”, encompassed screenings of short films by Oindrila Duttgupta, Priyanka Chhabra, Shilpi Gulati and Shaheen Ahmed, bringing together four young filmmakers based in Delhi to showcase their work and engage in a discussion on the workshop’s themes. Screenings were followed by a discussion with the filmmakers and writer/ journalist Nisha Susan.



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MIN XIE - NEW RESEARCH FELLOW



We cordially welcomed Min Xie as Research Fellow at the Chair of Development Economics at the South-Asia Institute. He will be conducting research within the framework of the research project “Micro-finance in Low-Income Countries”.

His research interests include Applied Microeconomics and Development Economics. He graduated in Economics (Master) at the Center for Monetary and Financial Studies (CEMFI) Madrid, Spain and in International Economics (B.S) at Guangdong University of Finance and Economics (GDUFE) Guangzhou, China.

JIVANTA SCHÖTTLI AS INTERIM PROFESSOR

Dr. Jivanta Schöttli was Interim Professor at the Department of Political Science at the South Asia Institute in winter term 2015. She gave a seminar and a lecture entitled „State and International Politics in South Asia: the case of India“, and also a colloquium entitled „Theory and Method in Politics of South Asia“.

Jivanta Schöttli received her Ph.D. in 2009 at the Department of Political Science, South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg. Her subject of the Ph.D. thesis was “Strategy and Vision in Politics. Jawaharlal Nehru’s policy choices and the designing of political institutions“.



HABILITATION BY KARIN POLIT

Karin Polit (Assistant Professor at the Department of Anthropology) habilitated on December 09th at the University of Heidelberg. In her second monograph “When Gods Set Out To Wander”, the basis for the Habilitation, Karin Polit describes the journey of a divine king through the mountains of the Garhwal Himalayas and eventually to the stage in Delhi.



The book describes what the means to his devotees and takes the reader on a journey through the various ritual practices performed for his entertainment or as a means of direct contact between deity and devotees. As some of the performances that are part of divine processions in the Himalayas have inspired the local elite to produce performative pieces of heritage theatre, the book also shows the effects of global discourses on intangible heritage and folklore on the ritual traditions of the Garhwal Himalayas in Northern India.

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NADINE PLACHTA ELECTED VICE PRESIDENT IN THE BOARD OF GZK

Nadine Plachta was elected vice president in the board of the Goethe Zentrum Kathmandu in September 2015. The GZK is not only the leading German language institute in Kathmandu. It also engages in a large number of activities to promote cultural exchange. The board, comprising eight members including the German Ambassador, is reconstituted every two years. Nadine Plachta currently is the Resident Representative at the South Asia Institute's Kathmandu Office. She is also a PhD candidate in Global Studies at the Institute for the Science of Religion at the University of Bern, Switzerland. She earned an MA in Social Anthropology and Science of Religion from Heidelberg University. Her doctoral work focuses on concepts of identity, belonging, and place among the Tsumpas, a community in Nepal's northern borderlands. Her research interests include gender and borderland studies in South Asia and the Himalayan region.



CHRISTIANE BROSIOUS: FELLOW AT THE MARSILIUS-KOLLEG



From September to November, Christiane Brosius was invited to the Institute for European Global Studies at the University of Basel, as senior visiting fellow, working in the field of Global Ageing on the topic of "Intergenerational perspectives on aging in urbanising Nepal". From April 2016 to March 2017, Christiane Brosius will be a fellow at the Marsilius-Kolleg, Heidelberg University, where she will be conducting research on „Beyond North and South, comparative urban research in the context of natural and social resource conflicts“ (South Asia).

WELCOME TO SHEELA SARAVANAN

We cordially welcomed Sheela Saravanan at the South Asia Institute. Since January 2016 she is working on a DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) funded project. The research aims to examine individual notion of 'desired children' (Wunschkind/Vansh) shaped by the social experiences in the German and Indian contexts that lead to selective abortions. In this project she aims to use postmodern theories as a basis to understand the interactions between disability and gender theories. She will be teaching 'Cross-border Reproductive Technologies: Socio-Ethics and Law' during the summer semester at the SAI.

Dr. Sheela Saravanan has 2 Masters from Indian Universities of Bombay and Pune in Geography and Development Planning. She has a Ph.D. from Australia in Public Health on the influence of biomedical frameworks of knowledge on local birthing practices in India.



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WELCOME TO PROF. MONICA SINGHANIA

We welcomed Prof. Monica Singhania as our guest at the Department of Development Economics, SAI. She is a Research Fellowship-holder of the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg and a Professor at the Faculty of Management Studies (FMS), University of Delhi. Her research interests are writing business cases, applying economic principles to management accounting and public finance.



Monica Singhania is Professor at the Faculty of Management Studies (FMS), University of Delhi. She is a graduate from Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC), post-graduate from Delhi School of Economics and a Fellow Member (FCA) of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. She has the distinction of being placed in the merit list of the examinations conducted by both the University as well as the Institute. She has been awarded Ph.D. in the area of corporate finance and taxation from the University of Delhi.

AWARD FOR ADITYA GHOSH

Aditya Ghosh, Research Associate at the Department of Geography at the South Asia Institute won the Asian Environment Journalism Award for the articles entitled "Lured by marriage promises, climate victims fall into trafficking trap" and "Everyday disasters' driving flight from Sundarbans". The articles were published in a group entry by Reuters AlertNet (Thomson Reuters Foundation). His current research area also comprises Indian Sundarbans and challenges of climate change adaptation therein. Aditya Ghosh is holding two master degrees, one in environment & development from the University of Sussex, UK (2010) and a second in journalism from the University of Calcutta, India (2000).



POSTER AWARD FOR JUDITH MÜLLER

Judith Müller was awarded with a poster prize for her presentation on „Urban Water Infrastructures in Transition: The Case of Leh“ at the „Mountains of our Future Earth Conference“ which took place in Perth, Scotland, from 04. to 08. October 2015. The conference is part of a series of events which is taking place every five years to discuss recent findings on global change and mountains. It covered a diverse set of topics key to sustainable mountain development and highlighted the interrelations between environmental problems and social change.



Judith Müller's poster presented preliminary results of her PhD research on Water Governance in Ladakh in the Indian Transhimalayas. Judith is member of the Junior Research Group "Environment and Health" at the Heidelberg Center for the Environment which is based at the Department of Geography at the South Asia Institute.

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HÖFFMANN-RESEARCH PRIZE FOR INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE 2015 TO PROF. DR. AXEL MICHAELS

Source: University of Vechta, Heidelberg University

Prof. Dr. Axel Michaels, head of the department of Cultural and Religious History of South Asia at the South Asia Institute and director of the Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context", received the Höffmann-Academic Award for Intercultural Competence 2015.

Prof. Dr. Axel Michaels was honored for his outstanding and groundbreaking works on different cultures with a focus on Asia. His international research projects as well as his contributions to transdisciplinary and transcultural studies were acknowledged by jury chairman Prof. Dr. Egon Spiegel. The jury also mentioned his effort for sharing his knowledge with the public and his personal commitment for his research areas, such as the fundraising campaign for Nepal.

Axel Michaels has been one of the founding directors of the Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context" since 2007, and of the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies (HCTS) since 2013. He also heads the "Documents on the History of Religion and Law of Pre-modern Nepal" research unit of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities. From 2002 to 2013, Michaels served as spokesperson for the "Ritual Dynamics" Collaborative Research Centre, which he was instrumental in founding. He joined the faculty at Heidelberg University in 1996 as professor of Classical Indology at the South Asia Institute, where he heads the Department of Cultural and Religious History of South Asia.

In his work on the cultural and religious history of South Asia, Axel Michaels combines text studies and ethnographic research in a unique way, and thus established a new area of research known as "Ethno-Indology". His research is focused on the practice and history of Hinduism in India and the religions of Nepal, in particular rituals and festivals. His work also includes the study of sacred maps and religious geography of Benares as well as Hindu asceticism. The laws of ancient India and legal literature of pre-modern Nepal are other areas of interest.

The award endowed by travel entrepreneur Hans Höffmann comprises an award sum of 10,000 euros and honors outstanding and pioneering work in topics of intercultural competence. It is awarded annually by the University of Vechta at over 5,000 universities and research institutions worldwide.

The public award ceremony took place on 4 February 2016 in the auditorium of the University of Vechta. Prof. Dr. Christoph Wulf, anthropologist and educationalist at the Freie Universität Berlin, gave a laudatory speech.



Photo: Heidelberg University

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P. SAHADEVAN AS DAAD GUEST PROFESSOR AT SAI

Professor P. Sahadevan (Centre for South Asian Studies, School of International Studies, JNU) will act as DAAD Guest Professor, during the summer term of 2016. He will bring in his rich expertise in conflict resolution and South Asia studies. He is also Director of Pakistan Studies Programme and one of the world leading experts on Sri Lanka and Maldives.



He will offer one foundation course and two seminars. The foundation course entitled 'Introduction to Conflict Resolution', seeks to expose students to rich concepts, theories, typologies, templates and guiding visions developed in the field of peace and conflict resolution. The undergraduate seminar will focus on 'Peace and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka: Challenges and Prospects', whereas the advanced seminar, offered to MA students will analyse 'Why South Asia Matters in International Politics'. Professor Sahadevan intends and looks forward to having an intense and rewarding exchange with the faculty members as well as students, beyond his teaching assignments.

GUEST RESEARCHER AT DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY



Douglas Hill, who is a Senior Lecturer in Development Studies at University of Otago, New Zealand, was a guest researcher at the Department of Geography of the South Asia Institute till December 2015. He completed a PhD from Curtin University and joined the University of Otago in 2006. Most of his work is concerned with South Asia, particularly India (with a focus on the state of West Bengal), although he also has research interests in Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh. His research focuses on Rural Development, Environmental Management and Food Security; Transboundary Water Resources; Ports and Migrant Labour; and Indian Cities and Socio-Spatial Changes associated with the 'new' India.

OBITUARY FOR MANUEL SARKISYANZ

The SAI is united in grief over the loss of Manuel Sarkisyanz (born 23 June 1923 in Baku), who passed away at the age of 91 years on 12 March 2015. Sarkisyanz studied at the universities of Tehran and Chicago. In 1952 he received his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago and was a student of Arnold Bergstraesser. To his invitation he was 1956-1958 Speaker of the German Council on Foreign Relations. In 1960 he was a Visiting Professor at the History Department of the University of Kiel, 1961-1962 for history and politics of South Asia in Freiburg and 1962-1963 he was a Visiting Professor at the University of Kansas. 1963-1967 he was apl. Professor of the University of Freiburg. Since 1967 he was Professor of Political Science at the South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University. Since his retirement Sarkisyanz lived in Ketsch and in Mérida, Mexico.



M. Sarkisyanz 1973

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OBITUARY FOR U TIN HTWAY

by Tilman Frasch

U Tin Htway (17 September 1930 - 23 October 2015) Born in Monywa, Upper Burma, where his father ran one of Burma's first fixed-price shops, U Tin Htway and family moved to Rangoon in the mid-1930s and settled in Sanchaung, Rangoon's „Burmese village“. After the war, he went to Rangoon University to read Burmese language and literature. With a BA in hand, he joined the Burma Translation Society as one of the editors of the Encyclopedia Birmanica, while also helping out with the family's printing business. An offer to work for the Burma Programme of the BBC World Services provided a welcome opportunity to leave Burma shortly after Ne Win's coup d'etat. During the five years in London, U Tin Htway enrolled again at university to complete an M.Phil dissertation on Thakin Kodawhmaing's political writings, which he completed under the supervision of Prof U Hla Pe.



U Tin Htway 1973

Amidst preparations for his return to Burma, as the time at the BBC was nearing completion, he received an invitation by Manuel Sarkisyanz, the newly-appointed professor of South Asian Politics at the South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University, to serve as a lecturer in Burmese.

After two years, this initially temporary lectureship was turned into a permanent one on Prof Sarkisyanz's initiative, making U Tin Htway the scholar he never pretended to be. „The more I read the more I realize how little I know“, he'd frequently say. However, this did not prevent him from closely cooperating with Prof Sarkisyanz, and moreover his position at the SAI brought him in contact again with his former saya-gyi Gordon Luce, under whom he had studied at Rangoon University. Luce had re-settled to Jersey Island after being forced to leave Burma, and throughout the 1970s U Tin Htway regularly visited Luce to study the history and epigraphy of Pagan.

Above anything else, it was the Burmese language - word roots, etymologies, compounds and changes of meaning - that interested U Tin Htway and continued to keep him busy even after retiring from university in 1995. He enjoyed reading classical literature and inscriptions over and over again, checking meanings, morphologies and lexemes (and occasionally loathing Burmese authors for their deliberate alterations and innovations), while keeping his notes and thoughts in an ever-growing collection of index cards. Unabatedly sharp-minded and full of ideas as ever, he began to mention more often than before that he felt increasingly feeble and tired since the beginning of this year. One week after his 85th birthday, he was admitted to hospital after suffering another fall, and despite receiving intensive care he did not recover, passing away peacefully on the 23rd of October.

Anicca vata sankhara, uppada-vaya-dhammino; Uppajjitva nirujjhanti, tesam vupasamo sukho'ti.

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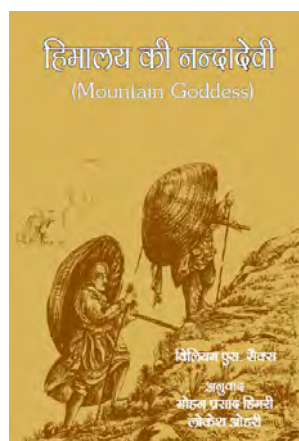
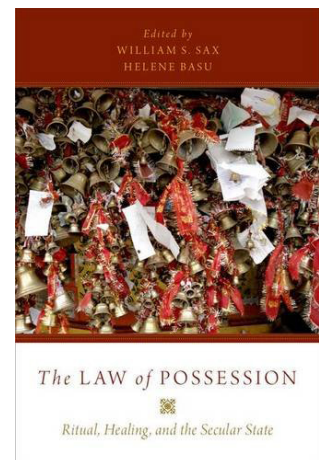
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NEW PUBLICATIONS BY WILLIAM SAX

Oxford University Press published a book edited by Prof. Dr. William Sax (Head of the Department of Anthropology, South Asia Institute): "The Law of Possession: Ritual, Healing, and the Secular State" and "Himalaya ki Nandadevi" - the Hindi translation of William Sax's 1991 book "Mountain Goddess: Gender and Politics in a Himalayan Pilgrimage".

The Law of Possession: Rituals combining healing with spirit possession and court-like proceedings are found around the world and throughout history. A person suffers from an illness that cannot be cured, for example, and in order to be healed performs a ritual involving a prosecution and a defense, a judge and witnesses. Divine beings then speak through oracles, spirits possess the victim and are exorcized, and local gods intervene to provide healing and justice. Such practices seem to be the very antithesis of modernity, and many modern, secular states have systematically attempted to eliminate them. What is the relationship between healing, spirit possession, and the law, and why are they so often combined? Why are such rituals largely absent from modern societies, and what happens to them when the state attempts to expunge them from their health and justice systems, or even to criminalize them? Despite the prevalence of rituals involving some or all of these elements, this volume represents the first attempt to compare and analyze them systematically. The Law of Possession brings together historical and contemporary case studies from East Asia, South Asia, and Africa, and argues that despite consistent attempts by modern, secular states to discourage, eliminate, and criminalize them, these types of rituals persist and even thrive because they meet widespread human needs.



Himalaya ki Nandadevi

Himalaya ki Nandadevi: Every few decades, thousands of Hindu villagers in the Central Himalayas of North India carry their regional goddess Nandadevi in a bridal palanquin to her husband Shiva's home, walking barefoot over icebound mountain passes to a lake surrounded by human bones. This Royal Pilgrimage of Nandadevi is a ritual dramatization of the post-marital journeys of married women from their natal homes to their husbands' homes. _ Mountain Goddess_ is an anthropological study of this pilgrimage and the cult of Nandadevi, especially as they relate to local women's lives.

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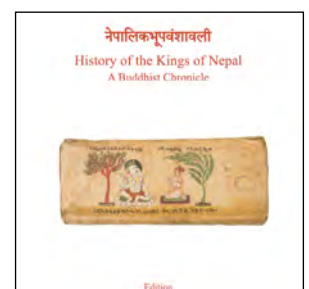
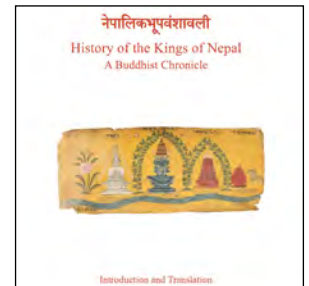
NEW TRANSLATION OF NEPAL'S CHRONOLOGY

Source: Heidelberg University

The popular 19th century Nepali chronicle (Vamsavali) with the title *Nepalika-Bhupa-Vamsavali: History of the Kings of Nepal – A Buddhist Chronicle* has been newly edited and translated into English by Dr. Manik Bajracharya, Prof. Axel Michaels, and Prof. Niels Gutschow. The three-volume work was published by Himal Books.

The books unlock the secrets of Nepali history and was first translated by Daniel Wright in 1877 and while the 'Wright Chronicle' became the most readily available English translation of its time, it was incomplete and incorrect in many areas. Wright failed to translate many obscure passages and he often misidentified places and misunderstood important concepts. This new translation aims to correct the mistakes and fill the gaps found in the earlier translation.

The first volume of the new book contains an editio princeps of the Nepali text of the chronicle. The original manuscript of the chronicle has been archived at the Cambridge University. The second volume of the book consists of the introduction and a comprehensive annotated translation of the Nepali Chronicle. The third volume consists of several maps accompanied by drawings of the 19th century which are contemporary to the composition of the chronicle. Some of the included drawings have not yet been published elsewhere. The book includes the drawings made by a Nepalese painter Rajman Singh and the then surgeon at the British Residency in Kathmandu Henry Oldfield.



Prof. Niels Gutschow, Dr. Manik Bajracharya and Prof. Axel Michaels presenting their books

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JULIANE DAME: FOOD SECURITY IN HIGH MOUNTAIN REGIONS

The newly published book „Ernährungssicherung im Hochgebirge. Akteure und ihr Handeln im Kontext des sozioökonomischen Wandels in Ladakh, Indien“ by Dr. Juliane Dame has been published by Franz Steiner Verlag and deals with distinctive features of food security in high mountains. Based on an empirical case study in Ladakh, India, the study analyses food security strategies of local actors in the context of rapid political and socio-economic change, from an actor-oriented and multiscale perspective.

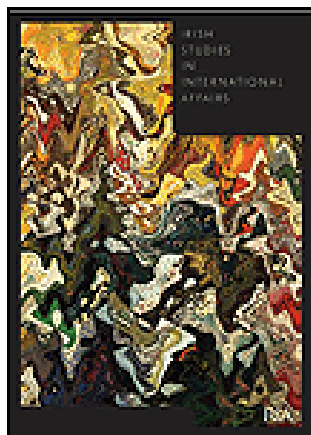
Malnutrition, also described as hidden hunger, is prevalent in this high mountain region and usually results from low dietary diversity and seasonal shortfalls of food. Results show the multifaceted ways in which households secure their livelihoods through a combination of agrarian land use practices, off-farm employment and external interventions. Subsistence-oriented combined mountain agriculture is no longer fundamental to survival as people's livelihoods become increasingly diversified and households become multi-local. Further, livelihood strategies are significantly shaped by development interventions of external actors and their visions of future development perspectives. These are negotiated in a “development arena” where actors with divergent interests and positions of varying power interact.

The book contributes to a new understanding of land-use, livelihoods and regional development paths in high mountains. It has been awarded the Wilhelm-Lauer-Preis.



ARTICLE BY SUBRATA K. MITRA AND RADU CARCIUMARU

Royal Irish Academy published an article by Prof. Subrata K. Mitra and Radu Carciumaru entitled „Beyond the ‘Low-Level Equilibrium Trap’: Getting to a ‘Principled Negotiation’ of the Kashmir Conflict“ in *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, Vol. 26, pp. 17-40.



Why does the Kashmir conflict continue to persist even 60 years since its origin? The article raises this question with specific reference to Indian strategy. Most of India's ethno-national conflicts have been solved within the framework of the Constitution of 1947 and within the boundary of the Indian state. Why is Kashmir different? The article calls for fresh thinking in the light of the theory of ‘principled negotiation’, and applies it to the complex politics of Kashmir where militancy, extra-territorial loyalties and democratic politics are entangled, and ensconced within deeply divided ethnic identities.

The article explains why the conventional Indian model of coping, based on the negotiated accommodation of sub-national movements through a strategic combination of force, power-sharing and federalisation, has only been partially successful in Kashmir, and offers some radical steps towards a more satisfactory solution.

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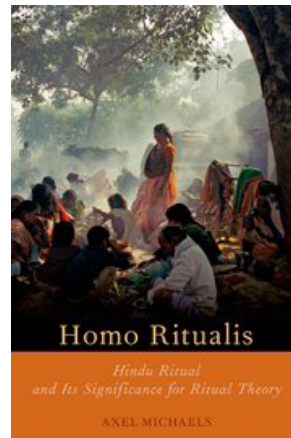
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AXEL MICHAELS: HOMO RITUALIS



Oxford University Press published in January 2016 the book „Homo Ritualis“, edited by Prof. Dr. Axel Michaels (Head of the department of Cultural and Religious History of South Asia at the South Asia Institute).

Homo Ritualis is the first book to present a Hindu theory of rituals. Based on extensive textual studies and field-work in Nepal and India, Axel Michaels argues that ritual is a distinctive way of acting, which, as in the theater, can be distinguished from other forms of action. The book analyzes ritual in these cultural-specific and religious

contexts, taking into account how indigenous terms and theories affect and contribute to current ritual theory.

ARTICLE BY MARCUS NÜSSER, JOHANNES ANHORN AND THOMAS LENNARTZ

A new article by Prof. Marcus Nüsser, Johannes Anhorn and Thomas Lennartz (Department of Geography, South Asia Institute) entitled “Rapid urban growth and earthquake risk in Musikot, mid-western Hills, Nepal” has been published. Taking Musikot as a characteristic case study of rapid urban change, this article analyses it's increasing local earthquake-risk in light of insufficient seismic building code implementation and risk-sensitive urban planning. Applying an approach that combines repeat photography and field mapping, the urban development of Musikot and the increasing fragility of the building stock are assessed using a modified seismic evaluation scheme for local building types.

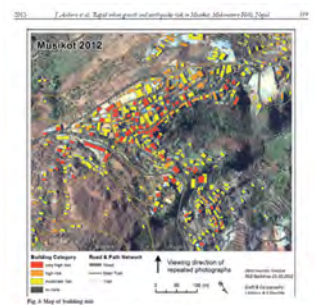


Fig. 3 Map of building site

BOOK LAUNCH AT UNIVERSITY OF DELHI



The book “Globalisation and Governance in India: New Challenges to Society and Institutions” edited by Lion König (Associate Member of the SAI, Centre for Culture, Media and Governance, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi) and Harihar Bhattacharyya (Professor of

Political Science, the University of Burdwan, India) was formally launched at the University of Delhi, Department of Political Science on Thursday, 26 November 2015. The volume was launched by Professor Achin Vanaik, former Professor and Head, Department of Political Science, Delhi University. Discussants on the panel were Dr. Lion Koenig, Prof. Ian Greene, York University, Toronto, Prof. Rekha Saxena, and Prof. Navnita Chadha Behera, both Department of Political Science, Delhi University.

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IMPRESSUM**Contributors of this edition:**

Melani Aloysious
Lucie Bernroider
Christiane Brosius
Radu Carciumaru
Simon Cubelic
Juliane Dame
Kaushiki Das
Tilman Frasch
Martin Gieselmann
Jennifer Landes
Betony Laybourne
Gautam Liu
Annika Mayer
Purbasha Mazumdar
Nicole Merkel-Hilf
Christina Oesterheld
Nadine Plachta
Karin Polit
Jürgen Schaflechner
Susanne Schmidt
Kerstin Sobkowiak
Lars Stöwesand
Verena Voeckel

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SOUTH ASIA INSTITUTE

Im Neuenheimer Feld 330
69120 Heidelberg
Germany

P: +49 (0) 62 21/54 -8900

F: +49 (0) 62 21/54 -4998

E: info@sai.uni-heidelberg.de

www.sai.uni-heidelberg.de

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Modern South Asian Languages and Literatures (Modern Indology)

Head: Prof. Dr. Hans Harder

Political Science

Head: Prof. Rahul Mukherji (from June 2016)

Branch Offices**New Delhi/ Indien**

Radu Carciumaru, M.A.
carciumaru@sai.uni-heidelberg.de

Kathmandu/ Nepal

Nadine Plachta M.A.
kathmandu@sai.uni-heidelberg.de

Colombo/ Sri Lanka

Darshi Thoradeniya
darshi@sai.uni-heidelberg.de

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Arriving by car from Autobahn A656

Turn left towards “Chirurgie” and “Zoo” at the end of the Autobahn. Cross the Neckar on Ernst-Waltz-Brücke. You are now at “Berliner Straße”. At the third traffic light turn left and enter into the Neuenheimer Feld Campus. After ca. 200 m the SAI is on the left hand side. Use one out of three public parking lots close to the institute.

Public Transport

From Heidelberg main station: Take bus line 32 or 21 (direction towards “Neuenheim”). Get off at the stop “Kopfklinik” or “Pädagogische Hochschule”. Bus line 31 also brings you to University Square (Uniplatz) in Heidelberg Old Town and back.

