CONCEPT

The third and concluding workshop of the Junior Research Group “Cultures of Disaster” addresses the transculturality of historical ‘natural’ disasters in South Asia, from the Middle Ages to the early twentieth century. In line with the two previous workshops “Hybridity of Historical Disasters: Nature, Society, and Power” (Beirut, 2010) and “Learning from Disaster from Antiquity to Early Modern Times: Knowledge and Experience, Flow and Blockage” (Heidelberg, 2009) the current workshop addresses a thematic aspect of the JRG’s research concerning the relationship between nature and society in a comparative and transcultural historical perspective.

For the present workshop our approach is supported by the theory of glocalisation which acknowledges the pervasive impact of the global and the local, resulting in unique outcomes in different geographic areas. The workshop focuses on the utilisation, invention and reconstruction of local knowledge and practices attempting to deal with natural disasters. Our aim is to analyse the ways which ideas and practices – whether originating in a South Asian context or emerging from elsewhere – have been incorporated, transformed or renewed in the process of glocalisation in South Asia.

CONTACT

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Cover picture: Gouache painting on paper. Kṛṣṇa Vatapatra śāhi; depicted as a baby, Kṛṣṇa lies on a banyan leaf, with the toes of his left foot in his mouth. During a great flood, Kṛṣṇa assumed the form of a baby floating on a leaf above the destructive waters of cosmic dissolution. The universe is protected from the flood after Kṛṣṇa swallowed it in its entirety.
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Workshop

THE TRANSCULTURALITY OF HISTORICAL DISASTERS
Governance and the Materialisation of Glocalisation

3-5 March 2011
Venue: Max Mueller Bhavan
3, Kasturba Gandhi Marg
New Delhi 110001

Organised by “Cultures of Disaster” (JRG A6), Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe”, Heidelberg University in cooperation with the Cluster Liaison Office New Delhi and the Goethe-Institut, Max Mueller Bhavan, New Delhi
The Transculturality of Historical Disasters: Governance and the Materialisation of Glocalisation

PROGRAMME

Thursday, 3 March 2011

2.30 - 3 pm
Gerrit Jasper Schenk
Welcome and Introduction

Session I: Interpreting Disasters
Chair: Monica Juneja (Heidelberg Univ.)

3 - 3.45 pm
Audrius Beinorius (Vilnius Univ.)
Tracing the Will of Stars: Indian Astrology and Divination on Natural Disasters and Threats

3.45 - 4.30 pm
Eleonor Marcussen (Heidelberg Univ.)
Competing Knowledge: Explanations to the Cause of the Bihar Earthquake 1934

Tea break

5 - 5.45 pm
Vikas Lakhani (TISS, Mumbai)
Perception of Environmental Risk among Three Communities in Anklesvar, Gujarat

Short break

6 - 7 pm
Edward Simpson (SOAS, London)
Keynote lecture: Sublime Aftershocks: Sociological Reason in the Aftermath of an Earthquake in Gujarat, Western India

Discussant: Anu Kapur (Univ. of Delhi)

7.30 pm
Reception at MMB
with
Photo exhibition on floods in Assam by Kazu Ahmed (New Delhi)

Friday, 4 March 2011

Session II: Floods and Governing Rivers
Chair: Stefan Knost (Orient Institute Beirut)

9.30 - 10.15 am
Nitin Sinha (Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin)
River, Land and Colonial State: Were ‘People’ Marginal? Some Examples from the Gangetic Diara Areas, 1790s-1920s

10.15 - 11 am
Rohan D’Souza (JNU)
Nature as Calamity: The Emergence of Flood Control in Colonial India

Tea break

11.30-12.15
Monisankar Misra (Tripura Univ.)
When the ‘Deluge’ Happened: The Flood of 1929 in Surma-Barak valley of Colonial Assam

12.15 - 1 pm
Pravin K. Kushwaha (JNU)
Floods and Urban Planning in Delhi: The Making of an Indian Megacity

1 - 2.30 pm
Lunch

Session III: Famine and Famine Relief
Chair: Gerrit Jasper Schenk (Darmstadt/Heidelberg Univ.)

2.30 - 3.15 pm
Georgina Brewis (Univ. of London)
‘Land of Famine’ or ‘Land of Charity’? British-Indian Encounters in Voluntary Famine Relief c. 1770-1961

3.15 - 4 pm
Charu Singh (JNU)
Negotiating the Monsoon: Drought, Famine and Cattle in the Deccan, 1876-77

Tea Break

4.30 – 5.15 pm
Sanjay Sharma (Univ. of Delhi)
A Political Experiment with Political Economy? Managing Famine Relief in Colonial North India

7.30 pm
Dinner

Saturday, 5 March 2011

Session IV: Tsunami
Chair: Stefan Knost (Orient Institute Beirut)

9.30-10.15 am
Ranjan Chakrabarti (Jadavpur Univ.)
The Calcutta Cyclone of 1737: Was it a Tsunami?

10.15 - 11 am
Ashok Marathe (Deccan College, Pune)
Tsunami Deposit at Kelshi, Ratnagiri District Maharashtra

Tea Break

11.30 – 12.15
Final discussion

WELCOME!