



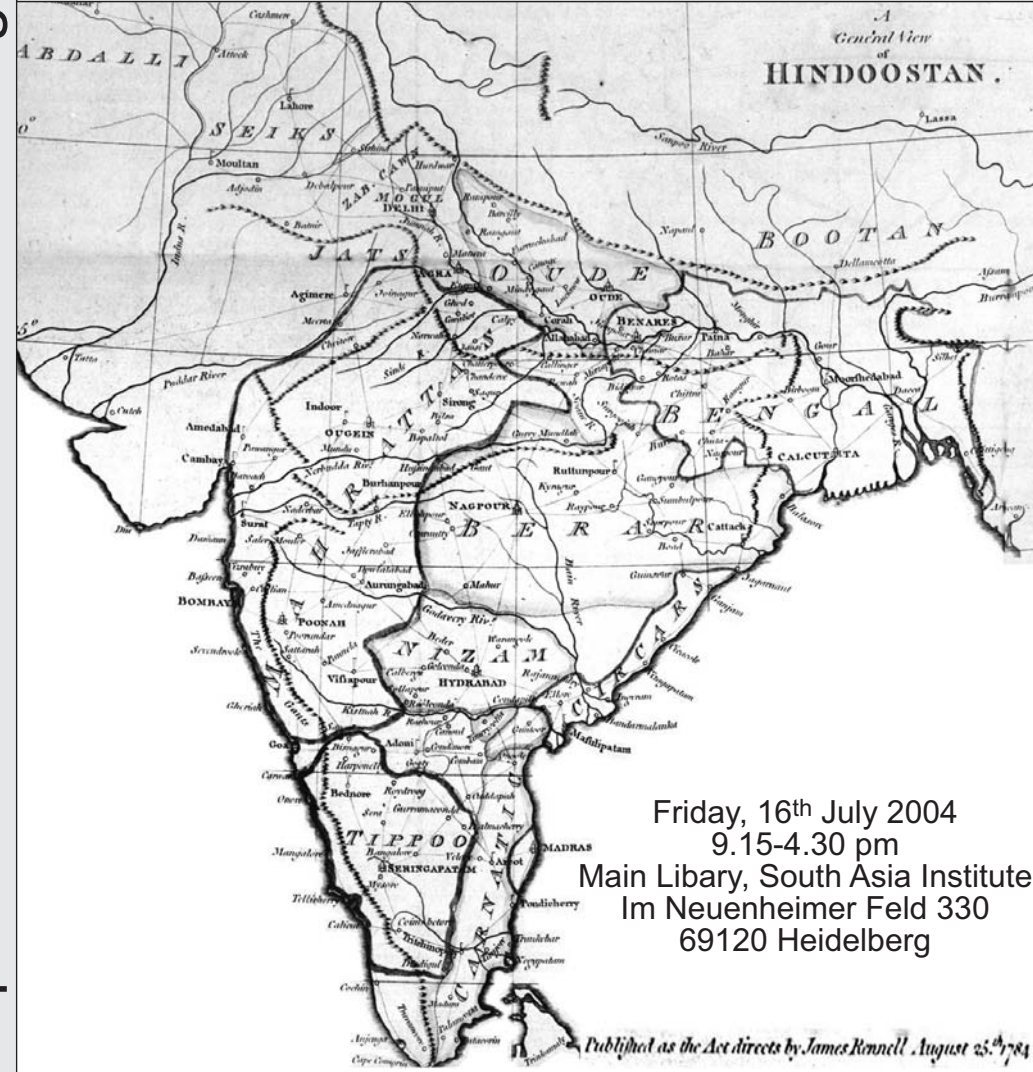
# Sovereignty Empire and Caste

Nicholas Dirks, Franz Boas Professor of History and Anthropology at Columbia University, is a leading specialist in South Asian history, historical anthropology and colonial history. Through his numerous publications, he has endeavoured to connect the social sciences with the humanities, and more significantly to bridge the gap between European cultural history and South Asian area studies. He is currently working on two new projects, namely on the interface between Enlightenment and Empire, and on the interconnection between historiography, historical theory and politics.

Dirks ranks as a prominent co-founder of "Ethnohistory", a discipline combining anthropological and historical techniques and insights. Exemplifying this approach, his path-breaking book *The Hollow Crown* (1987) redefines our understanding of the socio-political structures of pre-colonial India (focussing on the little Tamil kingdom of *Pudukkottai*), and examines how the relationship between society and the old regime was radically transformed under British colonialism. His recent book *Castes of Mind* (2001) has received wide acclaim, but, mounting a major critique of previous interpretations of caste, has also sparked off controversial debates. For Dirks, caste is neither a rigid, quasi-unchanged relict from earlier millennia, nor is it a single "system" quintessential to traditional India. The "caste system", in Dirks' view, is a modern phenomenon, produced by the concrete historical encounter between Indian society and British colonial rule. Of special interest for the study of ritual dynamics is Dirks' thesis that the ritualization of caste in 19th century was significantly shaped by anthropological and indological research of the period.

Professor Dirks' visit to Heidelberg will present an ideal opportunity for faculty, students and all those interested in the field of cross-cultural interaction to learn more about these controversial views and to engage in stimulating debates. All members of the academic community are warmly invited to attend his public lecture on Thursday, July 15<sup>th</sup> and to participate in the workshop on Friday, July 16<sup>th</sup>.

Ruprecht-Karls Universität Heidelberg



Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2004  
9.15-4.30 pm  
Main Library, South Asia Institute  
Im Neuenheimer Feld 330  
69120 Heidelberg

Jointly organized by the  
Collaborative Research Center "Dynamics of Ritual"  
History of Religions and Mission Studies (Theological Faculty)  
Department of History (South Asia Institute)

9.15-11.30

Nicholas B. Dirks (New York):  
*Sovereignty and Empire: Britain, India and the late 18th Century*

Georg Berkemer (Kiel):  
*The Politics of Empire: An Evolutionary Perspective*

Heiko Frese (Kiel):  
*Reframing Sovereignty: The British in Orissa*

11.15-11.45 Coffee

11.45-1.30

Nicholas B. Dirks:  
*Castes of Mind*

Gita Dharampal-Frick (Heidelberg):  
*Reconsidering Marginality: Historical Shifts in the Status of "Outcastes" in Early Modern South India*

Will Sweetman (Newcastle):  
*Colonialism all the way down? Caste in Early Missionary Writing on South India.*

1.30-2.30 Lunch

2.30-4.30

Andreas Nehring (Neuendettelsau):  
*Collecting Culture: Marginalia in the Mission Archives*

Michael Bergunder (Heidelberg):  
*Caste versus Language: Regional Identities in Colonial and Postcolonial India*

Martin Fuchs (Berlin):  
*Caste Modes of Being: Discursive Formulas and Articulations of Change*

4.30 Coffee

Participants who wish to join the workshop should register by **July 8<sup>th</sup>**.

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South Asia Institute  
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Public Lecture  
Nicholas B. Dirks  
*The Ethnographic State:  
The Ritualization of Caste in Colonial India*  
Thursday, 15th July 2004, 6.15 pm  
Alte Aula der Universität, Grabengasse 1