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Einladung zum Vortrag

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Will the Real Delhi Stand Up Tourism and the Visual Character of the City

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Seminarraum 1, Bereich Tibet- und Buddhismuskunde
Institut für Südasien-, Tibet- und Buddhismuskunde,
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In my presentation I will try to understand how Delhi is visually communicated by the stake holders to its prospective viewers, most importantly the tourists. The modern, colonial and post-colonial Delhi has its centre of power in the Raisina hills, away from poverty, filth and congestion. The British imperialists created the new city of Delhi away from the last Mughal city, to distinctly create a new identity of imperial power, glory and wealth. They used red sandstone, but apart from that did everything to create the image of a European power.

I would like to suggest that despite all the imposing structures the British constructed, and in spite of all the expensive residential quarters built by newly rich residents, the Delhi that the government, tourist agencies and their publicity materials try to present, to attract potential tourists, is showcasing mainly its Islamic past. No foreign tourist comes to see modern Delhi, and even tourist literature hardly has British monuments on its list of important sites. Almost all sell Delhi on the visual representation of its Islamic remains. That is what I call **Jo Dikhta hai so Bikta hai** (What is seen, gets sold). Delhi has laid its claim to be included in the list of World Heritage cities but for reasons best known to UNESCO, that status has been denied until now. What is important here is that the claim to World Heritage City status is being made on the basis of Delhi's Islamic past.