



## THE NALANDA-SRIWIJAYA LECTURE SERIES

### **Turbulent Passages from the Indian Ocean Across the Pacific: Negotiating the Cross-Currents between Oceanic and Global Histories**

Date: Monday, 13 July 2009  
Time: 4.00 pm – 6.00 pm  
Venue: Seminar Room II, ISEAS

#### About the Speaker

**Professor Sugata Bose**  
Gardiner Professor of History; and  
Director, South Asia Initiative  
Harvard University



Sugata Bose was educated at Presidency College, Calcutta, and the University of Cambridge where he obtained his Ph.D. His books include *Agrarian Bengal: Economy, Social Structure and Politics* (1986), *South Asia and World Capitalism* (1990), *Peasant Labour and Colonial Capital* in *The New Cambridge History of India* series (1993), *Credit, Markets and the Agrarian Economy of Colonial India* (1994), *Nationalism, Democracy and Development* (1997, with Ayesha Jalal) and *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* (1998, 2004, with Ayesha Jalal) His much-acclaimed work, *A Hundred Horizons: the Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire*, was published in 2006 by Harvard University Press. In it Bose crosses area studies and disciplinary frontiers and bridges the domains of political economy and culture. Amartya Sen describes *A Hundred Horizons* as “an excellent historical study, full of contemporary relevance for understanding an important ancestry of present-day globalization”. Bose is also the author of numerous scholarly articles on modern economic, social and political history.

Bose is joint editor with Dr Sisir Kumar Bose of the twelve-volume *Collected Works* of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and joint editor with Krishna Bose of *Purabi: the East in its Feminine Gender* (2007), a book of translations by Charu C. Chowdhuri of Rabindranath Tagore’s poems and songs. He has made three documentary films on modern South Asian history and politics that have been broadcast on public television in the USA and India. He was a recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship in 1997 and gave the G.M. Trevelyan Lecture at the University of Cambridge.



Bose has served as Director of Graduate Studies in History at Harvard and is the founding Director of Harvard's South Asia Initiative. During 2008 Bose delivered the Rajendranath Das Keynote Lecture at the annual South Asian Studies conference at the University of California-Berkeley, the keynote lecture at the 10<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Gilder Lehrman Center at Yale University, and the Gustav Pollak Lecture 2008 at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

### About the Seminar

'All the seas of the world are one,' J. H. Parry had once commented on oceanic history in the modern era. In my book *A Hundred Horizons* I recorded a dissenting view. 'Just as waves in one ocean produce fluctuations in sea-levels in others,' I argued, 'the human history of the Indian Ocean is strung together at a higher level of intensity in the inter-regional arena while contributing to and being affected by structures, processes and events of global significance.' Through an exploration of voyages of indentured laborers, anti-colonial nationalists, and universalist intellectuals from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific, this lecture will comment on the complex relationship between inter-regional and global histories as well as oceanic and continental histories. By training the spotlight on the historical space intermediating between the nation and the globe, it will offer a new perspective on the history of globalization and tease out both the power and the limits of globalization as a historical phenomenon. It will also suggest ways in which the idea of Asia connected with the idea of the Indian Ocean or the Pacific and shaped the contours of cosmopolitan thought zones in the modern world. The global circulation of ideas may have been water-borne, but was never quite defined by an expanse of water except in a metaphorical sense. It is best in this context not to exaggerate the contradiction between oceans and continents that has crept into some of the scholarly literature. This lecture will revise though not repudiate the critique of "the myth of continents". Oceans divided as much as they connected those who inhabited their rival continental coasts. This lecture will underscore the formidable barriers that had to be broken down by the colonized peoples of Asia and the Indian Ocean world in pursuing their universalist aspirations in the age of global empire.

*ISEAS is pleased to invite you to this Lecture.*