

**NALANDA-SRIWIJAYA CENTRE (NSC) - NALANDA UNIVERSITY (NU)  
CONFERENCE**

**Imagining Asia(s): Networks, Actors, Sites  
10–11 October 2016, ISEAS, Seminar Room I & II**

**Opening Remarks by Mr Tan Chin Tiong  
Director, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute**

Welcome to the conference “Imagining Asia(s): Networks Actors, Sites”, jointly organised by the ISEAS Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre and Nalanda University in India.

We are honoured to host this academic event, which is the result of a partnership between our institutions. Following the establishment of Nalanda University in 2010 and the ISEAS Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre (NSC) in 2009, NSC held a series of workshops, seminars involving both our speakers, as well as guest speakers from overseas on Southeast Asia’s historical connections with India and beyond. We also co-published with Indian and US publishers. These activities served to raise awareness of Nalanda University even as it developed its infrastructure and capabilities as an academic institution.

In the course of the past two years, NSC and Nalanda University have collaborated on various initiatives, including the exchange of research fellows, and the inauguration of an internship programme for Nalanda University MA students at NSC.

This morning, I extend a warm welcome to our colleagues from Nalanda University, faculty members of the School of Historical Studies and the School of Buddhist Studies, and in particular, Vice Chancellor Dr Gopa Sabharwal, who have contributed to make this event a reality. I also welcome the overseas speakers, who have travelled from far away to participate in this conference.

The speakers in the next two days will explore the dynamics of cultural and material exchange across the vast geographical region of Asia. The papers to be presented in this conference set out to explore Asian societies, cultures, and identities as interconnected formations through trajectories of circulation of people, ideas, and artefacts.

To discuss the complex issues at stake, and bring a truly inter-disciplinary focus to the topic, the organisers have invited speakers from different backgrounds

and academic fields: Historians, Archaeologists, Art Historians, Philologists, scholars of Religion, and Social scientists. It is hoped that the discussion will integrate data from their respective fields, and provide a fresh perspective on the current scholarly debate. I also hope that the wide-ranging historical and geographical approach of this conference will enrich our understanding of the region and its neighbours in today's context.

So, without further ado, I would like to welcome you all to this conference and trust you will have a fruitful two days of discussions.

Thank you.