

Harvard Ezra F. Vogel Malaysia/Singapore Initiative Public Lecture Series

Topic : The Idea of Asia in Modern History

- Speaker:** : Professor Sugata Bose, Harvard University
Date : Tuesday, 27 October 2009
Venue : **HSS Auditorium (Basement 1-14)**
School of Humanities and Social Sciences, NTU
Time : 5.30 pm - 7.00 pm [*registration and reception start at 4.30 pm*]
Chairperson : Associate Professor Kwok Kian Woon, Head of Division of Sociology
School of Humanities and Social Sciences, NTU

Venue has been changed to
HSS Auditorium

Synopsis

All the seas of the world are one,' J. H. Parry had once commented on oceanic history in the modern era. In Prof Bose's book *A Hundred Horizons* he recorded a dissenting view. 'Just as waves in one ocean produce fluctuations in sea-levels in others,' he 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 India across 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 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 also 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.

Biography



Sugata Bose is the Gardiner Professor of Oceanic History and Affairs in the Department of History and the Director of the South Asia Initiative at Harvard University. Professor Bose's field of specialization is modern South Asian and Indian Ocean history. His most recent book is *A Hundred Horizons: the Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.) In it Bose crosses area studies and disciplinary frontiers and bridges the domains of political economy and culture. He obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge. He was a recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship in 1997. His books include *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* with Ayesha Jalal (2004); *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); with Ayesha Jalal, *Nationalism, Democracy and Development* (1997) and *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* (1998).

Registration

Admission is free and registration is required. As seats are limited, it will be on first-come-first-serve basis. To register, please click https://wis.ntu.edu.sg/pls/webexe/REGISTER_NTU.REGISTER?EVENT_ID=OA09092810572110 . If you have any queries, please feel free to contact Ms Joey Kek at 65148364 or email kqkek@ntu.edu.sg .

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