

## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **Twenty-one Scholars from Ten Countries Gather for International Conference on the Ramayana in Singapore for the First Time**

**SINGAPORE, 16 JULY 2010:** The Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) will host a gathering of twenty-one scholars from ten countries at the “Ramayana: Reinterpretation in Asia” conference on 17 and 18 July. The book, “Ramayana in Focus: Visual and Performing Arts of Asia” will also be launched this evening, as a prelude to the conference.

With Singapore’s multi-cultural background and ACM’s pan-Asian focus, ACM is well poised to host the Ramayana conference in Singapore focusing on South and Southeast Asia’s cultural adaptation of the Indian epic. The international conference, “Ramayana: Reinterpretation in Asia” features a panel of eminent scholars and performers from the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, France, Australia, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. It is the first ever conference which collectively focuses on the literary, visual and performing arts, contemporary culture, and female representations in the Ramayana. Highlights include a keynote speech by Robert Goldman, Professor of Sanskrit, University of California, Berkeley, as well as a special dance performance by renowned choreographer and dancer, Sardono Kusomo, founder of the Sardono Dance Theatre in Indonesia. *Please refer to Annex I for details on the conference.*

The book, “Ramayana in Focus: Visual and Performing Arts of Asia” features twenty articles from reputed international scholars including Mandakranta Bose from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Paula Richman from Oberlin College, USA, and John and Mary Brockington from the University of Edinburgh and International Association of Sanskrit Studies, Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof from the International Islamic University in Malaysia, and Zhang Xing from the Peking University in China and Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany. The book focuses on the *Ramayana* epic in literary, visual, performing and contemporary

art forms in different Asian cultures. Topics such as the royal murals of Phnom Penh and Bangkok, Ramayana in traditional Indian paintings from Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh as well as its portrayal in Chinese and Japanese literature and arts are covered. *Please refer to Annex II for the book synopsis and contents.*

To complete the entire experience of the *Ramayana*, one can visit the current special exhibition “Ramayana Revisited: A Tale of Love & Adventure” held at the Peranakan Museum, 39 Armenian Street. The exhibition explores the spread of the Ramayana beyond India, to the shores as far as Japan in the East, and Iran in the West.

*“Ramayana in Focus: Visual and Performing Arts of Asia” is available for \$70 at the Museum Shop by Banyan Tree located in ACM and the Peranakan Museum, as well as selected bookstores including Kinokuniya and Select Books. For overseas readers, please place orders through APD Singapore ([www.apdsing.com](http://www.apdsing.com)) or Banyan Tree ([www.museumshop.com.sg](http://www.museumshop.com.sg)). North and South American readers may contact Stallion Press ([thlow@stallionpress.com](mailto:thlow@stallionpress.com)).*

Registration for “*Ramayana: Reinterpretation in Asia*” can be made through [www.sistic.com.sg](http://www.sistic.com.sg), SISTIC outlets or at the ACM’s front counter.

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### **About the Asian Civilisations Museum**

The Asian Civilisations Museum's mission is to explore and present the cultures and civilisations of Asia, so as to promote awareness and appreciation of the ancestral cultures of Singaporeans and their links to Southeast Asia and the world. The Asian Civilisations Museum first began its operations at Armenian Street in 1997, moving to the historic Empress Place Building in 2003. The Armenian Street premises which re-opened as the new Peranakan Museum on 26 April 2008 showcases one of the world’s finest and most comprehensive collections of Peranakan artefacts.

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