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## **Serenity on the Silver Screen**

*2<sup>nd</sup> Asian Buddhist Film Festival in Singapore aims to promote peace and harmony*

**Singapore, March 28, 2011** – The 2<sup>nd</sup> Asian Buddhist Film Festival will take place in Singapore from May 5-8, 2011 at Golden Village, Great World City. Ten inspiring films from around the world – from Bhutan, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Sri Lanka, and the United States – will be featured, including award-winning film *Echoes of the Rainbow* by Alex Law, and feature documentary *My Reincarnation* by Jennifer Fox. Festival-goers will also have the opportunity to attend thought-provoking talks and post-film discussions.

Jointly organised by the Asian Buddhist Film Festival Pte Ltd (ABFF) and the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre (NSC), Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, the festival aims to reach out to a wide spectrum of viewers – young and old, Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike, with universal themes of self-identity, love, kinship, spirituality, and peace.

"The upcoming Film Festival aims to satisfy numerous requests from supporters, Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike, for a repeat event following the overwhelming success of the first Buddhist Film Festival in 2007," says Billy Lee, Co-founder and Chairman, ABFF.

One in three Singaporeans is Buddhist. "But this film festival is for everyone," adds Billy Lee. "It is a way to promote peace and harmony."

The festival will open on May 5<sup>th</sup> with the screening of critically-acclaimed filmmaker Alex Law's *Echoes of the Rainbow*. Set in Hong Kong, the film portrays the struggles of a family to retain its values in a modernising world. Law will grace the opening night and take questions from the audience after the screening of his film.

Directors Alex Law and Jennifer Fox, and Professor John Whalen-Bridge of the National University of Singapore, will conduct the post-screening discussion sessions. Ajahn Brahm, renowned Buddhist monk, teacher and author of *Who Ordered This Truckload of Dung*, will close the festival with a talk on Buddhism and its role in film.

The festival will be held two weeks before Singapore celebrates Vesak Day as an engaging way to learn and understand the diversity of the Buddhist way.

Ambassador K Kesavapany, Director of ISEAS says: "Helping to organise the Asian Buddhist Film Festival is one of the ways in which NSC seeks to contribute to cultural relations in Southeast Asia. In the great tradition of Nalanda, let us learn from each other in ways that promote global comprehension and tolerance. Seeking realisation has infinite avenues. Film helps us to explore those avenues."

Tickets will be available for purchase at Golden Village Great World City or [www.gv.com.sg](http://www.gv.com.sg) from April 1, 2011. The first ABFF raised \$40,000 for the President's Charity and the Children's Cancer Foundation. This time the organisers hope to raise more for charity.



### **About the Asian Buddhist Film Festival Pte Ltd**

The Asian Buddhist Film Festival (ABFF) has been conceived with the primary purpose of promoting peace, harmony and prosperity. This objective is met through interfaith dialogue and is the first step towards building mutual respect and understanding. ABFF uses the contemporary medium of film to encourage mindfulness through Buddhist principles. While incorporated in Singapore as a private limited company, ABFF is being run as a non-profit organization. All directors, advisers and committee members are involved in ABFF pro bono.

The ABFF's organising committee members include: Ms Tara Melwani, Director, The Jay Gee Melwani Group; Dr Tansen, Head, Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, ISEAS; Dr Geoff Wade, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, ISEAS; Dr John Whalen-Bridge, lecturer at the National University of Singapore; Mr Peter Tan, businessman; and Ms Rinkoo Bhowmik, ISEAS. Also on board is veteran arts administrator Ms Teo SweeLeng who has worked on over 20 major film festivals.

### **About the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, Institute of South East Asian Studies**

The Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, pursues research on historical interactions among Asian societies and civilisations. It serves as a forum for comprehensive study of the ways in which Asian politics and societies have interacted over time through religious, cultural, and economic exchanges and diasporic networks. The Centre also offers innovative strategies for examining the manifestations of hybridity, convergence and mutual learning in a globalising Asia. For more info, visit [www.iseas.edu.sg/nsc](http://www.iseas.edu.sg/nsc)

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