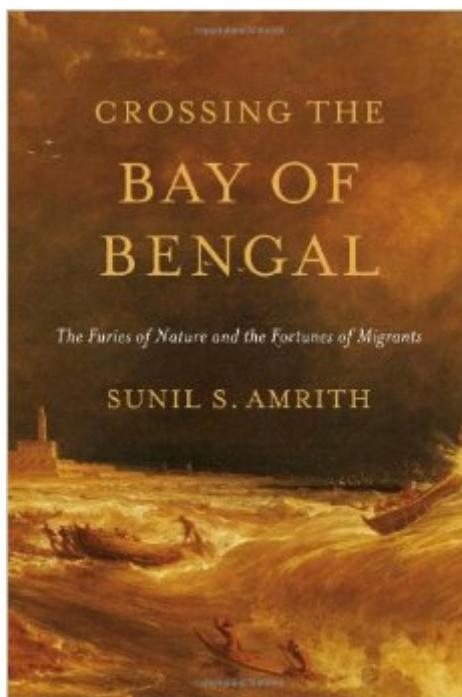


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Crossing The Bay Of Bengal: The Furies Of Nature And The Fortunes Of Migrants



Synopsis

The Indian Ocean was global long before the Atlantic, and today the countries bordering the Bay of Bengal—India, Bangladesh, Burma, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Malaysia—are home to one in four people on Earth. Crossing the Bay of Bengal places this region at the heart of world history for the first time. Integrating human and environmental history, and mining a wealth of sources, Sunil Amrith gives a revelatory and stirring new account of the Bay and those who have inhabited it. For centuries the Bay of Bengal served as a maritime highway between India and China, and then as a battleground for European empires, all while being shaped by the monsoons and by human migration. Imperial powers in the nineteenth century, abetted by the force of capital and the power of steam, reconfigured the Bay in their quest for coffee, rice, and rubber. Millions of Indian migrants crossed the sea, bound by debt or spurred by drought, and filled with ambition. Booming port cities like Singapore and Penang became the most culturally diverse societies of their time. By the 1930s, however, economic, political, and environmental pressures began to erode the Bay's centuries-old patterns of interconnection. Today, rising waters leave the Bay of Bengal's shores especially vulnerable to climate change, at the same time that its location makes it central to struggles over Asia's future. Amrith's evocative and compelling narrative of the region's pasts offers insights critical to understanding and confronting the many challenges facing Asia in the decades ahead.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Extraordinary review of historical background for the role the Bay played in the population

migrations that have shaped South and Southeast Asia. Provides an understanding of the likely geopolitical role that is emerging, particularly in Southeast Asia. This book provides a quick education about a region that will predictably witness China's desire to extend its zone of influence. Along with Robert Kaplan's book "Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and The Future of American Power", this book provides comprehensive coverage of a region whose importance will only grow in the future.

This is the most brilliant book of history I have read in a long time--and I'm a professional historian. Amrit has unearthed an extraordinary wealth of material but never lets it swamp his basic narrative. The writing is clear and readable without any academic jargon. A real tour de force.

If you are curious about why Muslims are in Indonesia or Myanmar, how the spice trade fueled mass migrations across the bay of Bengal, why the Japanese invaded Malaysia and how the British East India company dominated trade in this region in the 18th and 19th centuries then you may be interested in this book. A little academic at times but overall worthwhile

Beautifully and comprehensively narrated, 'Crossing The Bay of Bengal' offers deep (and easy to grasp) insights into the peoples and personas of South and South East Asia. Must read.

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