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Migration and Diaspora in Modern Asia

Migration is at the heart of Asian history. For centuries, migrants have tracked the routes and seas of their ancestors – merchants, pilgrims, soldiers, sailors – along the Silk Road and across the Indian Ocean and the China Sea. Over the last 150 years, however, migration within Asia and beyond has been greater than at any other time in history.

Sunil S. Amrith's engaging and deeply informative book crosses a vast terrain, from the Middle East to India and China, tracing the history of modern migration against the background of empires, their dissolution, and the onset of modernity. Animated by the voices of Asian migrants, it tells the stories of those forced to flee from war and revolution, and those who left their homes and their families in search of a better life.

These stories of Asian diasporas can be joyful or poignant, but they all speak of an engagement with new landscapes and new peoples. Migration has been central to making Asian societies as complex and diverse as they are today.

SUNIL S. AMRITH is Senior Lecturer in History at Birkbeck College, University of London. He is the author of *Decolonizing International Health: India and Southeast Asia, 1930–65* (2006), and his articles have been published in numerous journals, such as the *American Historical Review* and *Past and Present*.

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xii Acknowledgements

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Select Timeline

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 1405–33 | Admiral Zheng He's naval expeditions to Southeast Asia and Indian Ocean |
| 1498 | Vasco da Gama reaches India |
| 1511 | Portuguese conquest of Melaka |
| 1521 | First Spanish expedition to the Philippines |
| 1619 | Dutch East India Company establishes a base at Batavia |
| 1644 | Manchu conquest of China, establishing the Qing dynasty (1644–1912) |
| 1720 | Establishment of small Chinese agricultural settlements on Sumatra |
| 1740 | Massacre of Chinese residents in Batavia |
| 1757 | Battle of Plassey. English East India Company takes control of Bengal |
| 1786 | British settlement in Penang |
| 1819 | British settlement in Singapore |
| 1834 | Beginning of Indian indentured migration overseas |
| 1837 | Abolition of slavery in the British Empire |
| 1839–42 | First Opium War |
| 1845 | Peninsular & Oriental Mail Service crosses Indian Ocean to Singapore |
| 1851–64 | Taiping Rebellion |
| 1853 | Inauguration of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway |
| 1856–60 | Second Opium War |
| 1857 | Indian Mutiny–Rebellion |
| 1858 | Establishment of Crown Rule in India |
| 1867 | Meiji Restoration in Japan |
| 1869 | Opening of the Suez Canal |
| 1870s | British penetration into Malay Peninsula |
| 1870s | Massive increase in Indian and Chinese emigration to Southeast Asia |
| 1876–79 | Famines in India and China |
| 1878 | First Chinese overseas consulate – in Singapore |

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xiv Select Timeline

- 1885 Completion of British conquest of Burma. Increase in Indian migration follows
- 1893 Official end of Chinese ban on overseas migration
- 1895 Formation of the Federated Malay States
- 1895 First Sino-Japanese war. Japanese colonization of Taiwan
- 1896 First Chinese students arrive in Japan
- 1896–1902 Famines in India and China
- 1898–1902 Construction and opening of Manchurian Railway
- 1905 Japanese military victory over Russia
- 1910 Japanese colonization of Korea
- 1910–17 Indentured labour abolished in the British Empire
- 1911 Chinese Revolution
- 1922 Indian Emigration Act seeks closer control over overseas migration from India
- 1926–27 Peak years of Indian and Chinese migration to Southeast Asia
- 1929 Wall Street crash precipitates global economic crisis
- 1930 British Malaya begins to enforce immigration restrictions
- 1930–31 Saya San Rebellion in Burma
- 1931 Japanese conquest of Manchuria
- 1932 Discovery of oil in Bahrain. Small-scale flows of migrant labour begin.
- 1934–45 Chinese Communist Party's 'Long March'
- 1937–45 Second Sino-Japanese War
- 1941–45 Japanese conquest of Southeast Asia. Second World War in the Pacific
- 1942 Indian refugee exodus from Burma
- 1943–44 Bengal famine
- 1945–49 Chinese Civil War
- 1945–49 Indonesian Revolution. Republic of Indonesia inaugurated in 1949
- 1945–54 Vietnamese declaration of independence and war of independence. French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954
- 1946 Independence of the Philippines
- 1947 Partition of India. Independence of India and Pakistan
- 1948 Independence of Burma
- 1948 Independence of Sri Lanka
- 1948 Communist insurrection and declaration of Emergency in British Malaya
- 1949 Communist victory in Chinese Civil War. Inauguration of People's Republic of China and establishment of nationalist state on Taiwan

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Select Timeline

xv

- 1955–59 Construction of Bhilai steel plant in India
- 1957–65 Independence of Malaya in 1957. Malaya becomes Malaysia with the addition of Singapore, Sabah, and Sarawak in 1963. Singapore becomes an independent city-state in 1965
- 1958–61 China's Great Leap Forward, resulting in mass famine
- 1962 Military coup in Burma
- 1964 India–Sri Lanka accord on 'repatriation' of Tamils
- 1965 Indonesian military coup installs General Suharto. Mass killings
- 1966–76 Chinese Cultural Revolution
- 1969 'Racial riots' in Malaysia
- 1971 Formation of Bangladesh. India-Pakistan war
- 1973 Oil crisis as OPEC increases price of oil
- 1973 Beginning of large-scale migration from South Asia to the Gulf states
- 1975 Fall of Saigon. American exit from Vietnam. Beginning of refugee crisis of Vietnamese 'boat people' (through 1990s)
- 1975–79 Pol Pot regime carries out Cambodian genocide, which ends with Vietnamese invasion
- 1978 Chinese economic reforms begin
- 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran
- 1979 Russian invasion of Afghanistan. Beginning of Afghan refugee outflow
- 1983 Anti-Tamil pogroms in Sri Lanka
- 1991 Beginning of economic liberalization in India
- 1997–98 Asian financial crisis
- 2001– US-led invasion of Afghanistan
- 2008 Collapse of Lehman Brothers bank sparks global financial crisis
- 2009 Sri Lankan military defeats the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

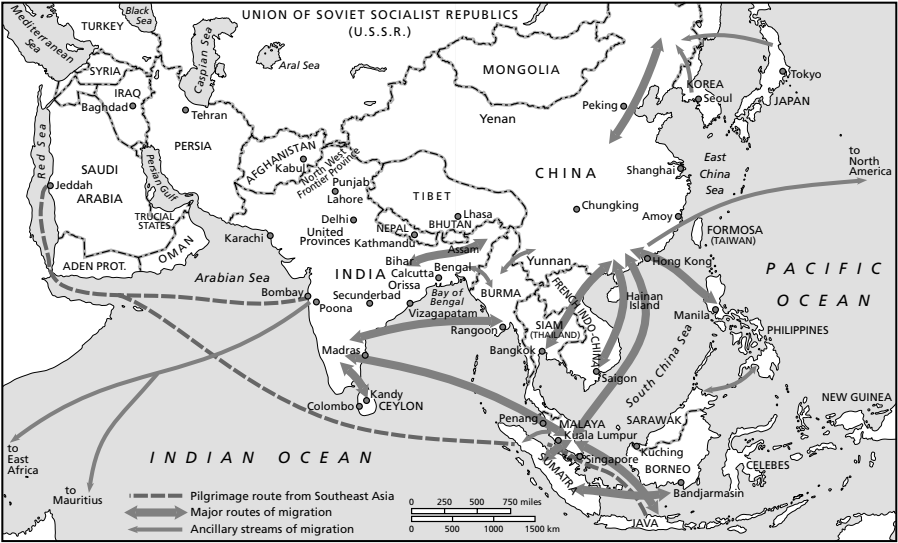
Glossary

<i>Baba</i> (m.)/ <i>Nyonya</i> (f.)	Local-born Chinese in Singapore and Malaysia: the descendents of early Chinese settlers who married local women and adapted aspects of local cultural practice.
<i>bumiputera</i>	‘Son of the soil’: political term for indigenous inhabitants of the Malay Peninsula, primarily ethnic Malays.
<i>dalit</i>	Preferred modern term for low-caste or ‘untouchable’ groups in India, used as a term of self-description by many such communities.
<i>hajj</i>	Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca.
<i>hawala</i>	Informal, trust-based remittance networks that have existed for hundreds of years across the Indian Ocean.
<i>hukou</i>	Chinese system of residential permits introduced in the 1950s.
<i>kangany</i>	Tamil term for an existing plantation worker/foreman who returned home to recruit workers on commission.
<i>kongsi/gongsi</i>	Overseas Chinese brotherhood of labourers and capitalists.
<i>laoxiang</i>	Chinese for homeland or ‘home place’.
<i>maistry</i>	Term used in colonial Burma for ‘ <i>kangany</i> ’.
<i>mestizo</i>	In this book, refers to mixed Chinese/Filipino community, predominantly Catholic.
<i>mui tsai</i>	‘Little sister’ in Cantonese: a form of domestic service in China, and among overseas Chinese communities, not easily distinguished from adoption.
<i>Nanyang</i>	Chinese term for Southeast Asia (‘Southern Ocean’).

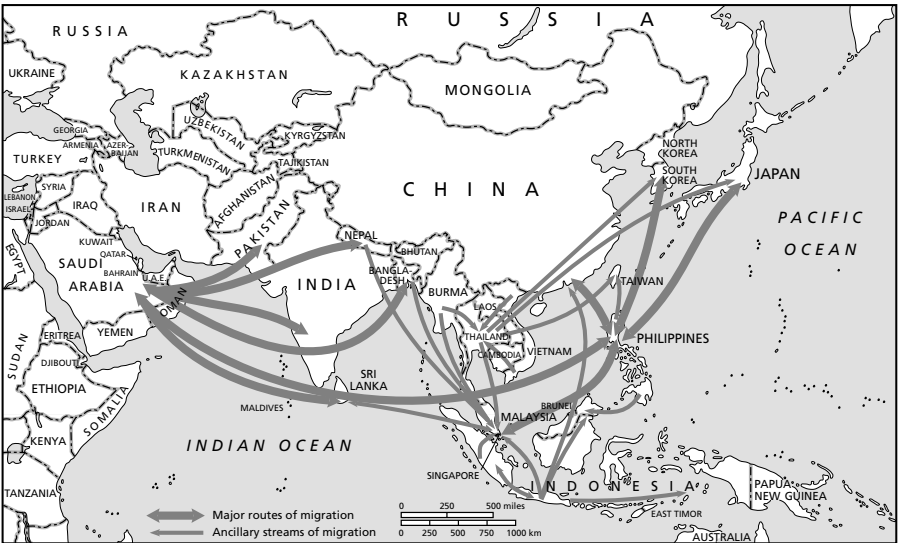
xviii Glossary

<i>Peranakan</i>	Indonesian term for descendents of early Chinese settlers who had married local women and adopted elements of indigenous culture.
<i>sardar</i>	Used widely in South Asian languages to denote a 'leader'; in this book, usually a labour boss/foreman.
<i>totok</i>	Used in colonial Indonesia to refer to recent immigrants ('pure Chinese') from China, distinguished from the Peranakan.
<i>Transmigrasi</i>	Indonesian programme of planned internal resettlement from Java to Sumatra and outer islands.
<i>zifa</i>	'Self-starters': voluntary Chinese migrants to Manchuria.

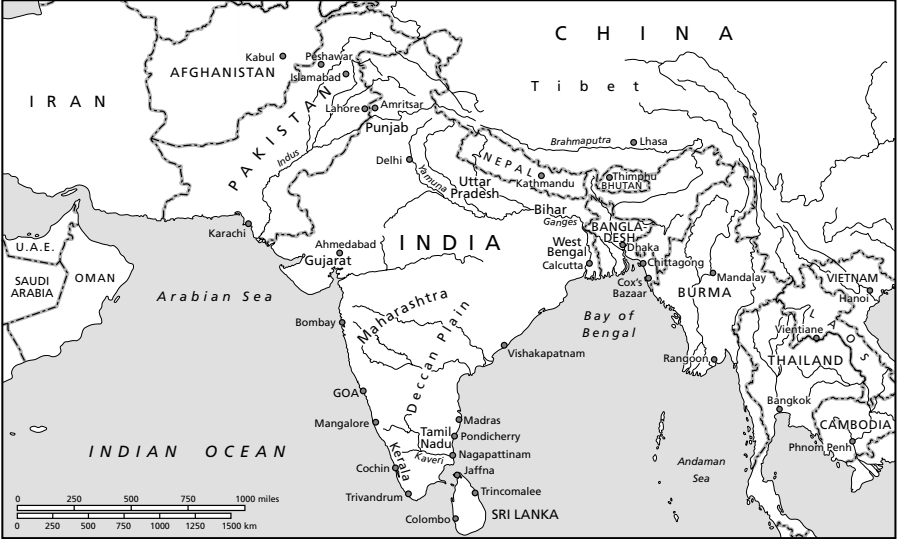
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Map 1. Routes of Migration in Asia, c. 1870–1930



Map 2. Routes of Migration in Asia, c. 1980–2010



Map 3. India



Map 4. China

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Map 5. Southeast Asia