

CALL FOR PAPERS

MOBILE BODIES

A Long View of the Peoples and Communities of Maritime Asia
November 10–11, 2017

An international conference held at

BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY

The first of a series of conferences on Asian Issues sponsored by the
Institute for Asia and Asian Diasporas

RECENT global upheavals have turned world attention to the plight of refugees, such as Syrians and the Rohingya of Myanmar who have chosen dangerous sea voyages to escape conflict and persecution. These dramatic images raise larger questions about the control over mobile bodies in the broader context of maritime Asia, pointing to phenomena that are by no means limited to our contemporary moment. For centuries, people have moved in and across the maritime world that stretches from the Indian Ocean to the western Pacific as refugees, slaves, and under other involuntary circumstances, as well as in the pursuit of trade, war, and religion. But this mobility has always been historically controlled, driven and regulated by larger forces. Religion, ecology, state power, and social hierarchies constrain and inform individual choices.

With a keynote lecture delivered by *AMITAV GHOSH*, this interdisciplinary conference will explore the mobility of individuals across maritime Asia with an interest in disaggregating different types of bodies and different types of travel. What sorts of bodies endeavored to cross the water between and along the coasts of Asia in the past and more recently? What does a 20th century Somali pirate have in common with a 16th century Javanese pilgrim heading to Mecca, or the Chinese residents of Dutch Batavia with the Filipino domestic workers in Dubai? What is the role of cooperation, violence and control in historical and contemporary Asian maritime travel? How has biopolitical control over travel been effected in the past and through modern technocratic interventions? How are the material findings of nautical archaeology changing our understanding of the movements of goods and people in maritime Asia? The goal of this conference is to pair contemporary and historical experiences of travel and mobility to understand continuities and changes experienced and brought about by traveling bodies in and across maritime Asia.

WE welcome papers that address a broad range of themes, with particular interest in the following topics:

- *Labor flows and recruitment
- *Voluntary and involuntary movement, including slave and refugee communities
- *Cultural meanings and representations of maritime travel and pilgrimage
- *How travelers have mobilized nautical technologies and knowledge transfer across oceans
- *Uses of force across maritime Asia
- *Uncertainties and vagaries of sea travel
- *Shifting contours of of trade diasporas
- *Identity and community formation among seafaring groups
- *Geopolitics of the ocean and its frontiers

PROPOSALS are sought from both junior and senior scholars, including graduate students, from all fields. We will consider individual paper proposals as well as panel proposals that include at least three papers on a selected theme. We may be able to provide some financial support for graduate students, as well as scholars that are based in the region of maritime Asia.

Click [HERE](#) to submit a 150-word abstract by **May 1, 2017**. Click [HERE](#) for the conference website. Questions may be sent to mobilebodies@binghamton.edu