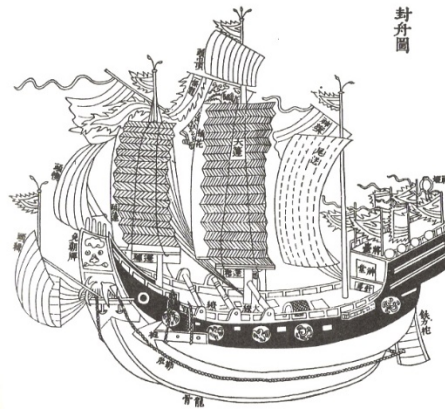


**Morris Rossabi**

## **The Mongols and the Sea**



Thursday, March 28, 2019

at 4 pm

Room 1122, School of Global and International Studies  
355 North Jordan Avenue,  
Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana

The conventional wisdom is that the Mongol Empire focused on overland expansion and commerce, and deriving from a landlocked region, the Mongols scarcely exhibited much knowledge and expertise in naval warfare and ocean borne trade. Their disastrous naval expeditions against Japan and Java would appear to confirm that the Mongols were not adept at sea voyages. However, the number of Yuan dynasty governmental agencies concerned with the sea, the number of missions they sent abroad to India and Japan, and the navigational innovations they sponsored challenge the view of the relative insignificance of the sea to the Mongol rulers. Moreover, the century of Yuan rule witnessed the largest flow of people and products throughout Eurasia until that time. The Mongols' knowledge of potential markets for goods and their own love of beautiful objects contributed to seaborne commerce. This presentation suggests that the Mongols set the stage for the renowned Zheng He expeditions of the fifteenth century.

Professor Rossabi is a historian of China and Central and Inner Asia. He teaches courses on Inner Asian, East Asian, and Chinese history at Columbia.

Co-hosted by: The Mongolia Society, Pan Asia Institute, Department of Central Eurasian Studies.



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