

Inner Asian and Altaic Studies Lecture



Wednesday, February 16, 2022

1:15 pm - 2:30 pm Eastern Time

Online event: [Register for Zoom link](#)

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Ethnic, Linguistic, and Religious Diversity in Afghanistan, in Historical Perspective

According to ethnographic studies there are as many as 16 main ethnic groups in contemporary Afghanistan. The Constitution of Afghanistan lists 14 ethnic groups. The ethnic groups are not racially homogenous. This extensive ethnic and linguistic diversity is a product of Afghanistan's central geographic position and long turbulent history. Ethnicity and ethnic discord have become major factors in the contemporary political landscape. For this reason, the appropriate and effective management of the ethnolinguistic diversity of the country has become a major topic of concern among Afghan intellectuals and cultural institutions particularly The National Museum Afghanistan, Kabul. Archaeological, numismatic, art historical and literary sources record this ethnic diversity throughout recorded history. This lecture will concentrate on two historical periods, that of the Kushan Empire (early 1st century to mid 3rd century C.E.) and the Shahi Kingdoms (The Turk Shahi and the Hindu Shahi , mid-7th century to early 11th century C.E.) . We will discuss the hypothesis that successful management of the diverse ethnic and religious legacy contributed significantly to the longevity of both dynasties.