

## Religious Diversity Colloquium

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

**Magnus Marsden** (University of Sussex)

### “Supplying Haji’s: Afghanistan’s Central Asian emigres in China and beyond”

This lecture focuses on the role played by traders from northern Afghanistan’s Central Asian borderlands in facilitating commercial exchanges between China, the Arabian Peninsula and a range of settings in West Asia. It explores in particular the activities across these contexts of ethnically Turkmen, Uzbek and Tajik traders whose families migrated from the Soviet Union to Afghanistan in the 1920s and 1930s. In the context of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, these families moved from Afghanistan to Saudi Arabia in the early 1980s, often staying for several years in cities and towns in Pakistan. Over the past three decades, such Central Asian emigre families (who mostly hold Afghan, Pakistani and increasingly Turkish nationality/travel documents) have established themselves as significant actors in the import to the Arabian peninsula of commodities made in China. The focus of this lecture is on the connections and inter-relationships between the geographically dispersed mobile communities involved in trading activities in Yiwu.

MAGNUS MARSDEN is Professor of Social Anthropology and Director of the Asia Centre at the University of Sussex. His work is centrally concerned with the study of Asia’s Muslim societies. He has conducted extensive fieldwork in Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan, as well as with diasporic communities from this region in the Gulf, Eastern Europe, and China. He is the author of *Living Islam: Muslim Religious Experience in Northern Pakistan* (Cambridge, 2005), and *Trading Worlds: Afghan Merchants across Modern Frontiers* (Oxford, 2015).

