China and Inner Asia before the “Silk Routes": Reviewing Some Possible Instances of Cultural Borrowings

Dr. Lothar von Falkenhausen is Professor of Chinese Archaeology and Art History at UCLA, where he has taught since 1993. He was educated at Bonn University, Peking University, Kyoto University, and Harvard University, and received his PhD in anthropology from Harvard in 1988. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His field of research is the archaeology of the Chinese Bronze Age, with a focus on large interdisciplinary and historical issues on which archaeological materials can provide significant new information.

Recent archaeological discoveries in China and beyond have reopened a discussion on a topic that had long been taboo: namely, the extent to which Chinese civilization was in contact with other parts of Eurasia during the two millennia that preceded the unification of the Chinese empire in 221 BC and the opening of the caravan-trading network through Central Asia known as the “Silk Routes” at the end of the second century BC. Even though this line of research is still very much in flux, Professor Lothar von Falkenhausen will present in his lecture some of the new evidence and propose some tentative ideas on how to interpret it.

Co-sponsored by WMU's
Department of Anthropology, Department of History and
the Diether H. Haenicke Institute for Global Education