

## **Richard Tapper**

### ***Afghan Village Voices: Stories from a Tribal Community* (I.B. Tauris, 2020)**

Afghanistan in the 20th century was virtually unknown in Europe and America. At peace until the 1970s, the country was seen as a remote and exotic land, visited only by adventurous tourists or researchers. *Afghan Village Voices* is a testament to this little-known period of peace and captures a society and culture now changed irreversibly by four decades of revolution, invasion, civil war, famine, exile, death and suffering.

This a book about the Piruzai, a tribal community of some 200 families who farmed in northern Afghanistan and in summer took their flocks to the central Hazârajât mountains. It is a collection of remarkable stories, folktales and conversations, recorded during field research in the early 1970s by Richard Tapper and Nancy Lindisfarne-Tapper (author of *Bartered Brides: Politics, Gender and Marriage in an Afghan Tribal Society*).

The stories range from memories of the Piruzai migration to the north a half century before, to the feuds, ethnic strife and the doings of powerful khans. There are stories of falling in love, elopements, marriages, childbirth, religious life, and the world of spirits. Still others are of farming and livestock-rearing, and the skills and skulduggery people need to survive. Providing unprecedented insight into the depth and colour of rural Afghan lives, the book is a remarkable document of Afghanistan at peace, told by a people whose voices have rarely been heard. *Afghan Village Voices* is not about current or recent events, but about the lives of some rural Afghans many of whose children and grandchildren have probably been actors in those events.

#### **About the author**

Richard Tapper is Professor Emeritus at SOAS. Anthropologist, field research in Iran, Afghanistan and Turkey. Books include *Pasture and Politics: Economics, Conflict, and Ritual among Shahsevan Nomads of Northwestern Iran*; *Frontier Nomads of Iran: A Political and Social History of the Shahsevan*; *Islam and Democracy in Iran: Eshkevari and the Quest for Reform*, and numerous edited volumes.