

Guest of Honor

University: Harvard

Prof. Richard N. Frye
Nationality: U.S.A



Abstract

Prof. Richard Nalson Frye was born in Birmingham, Alabama, USA 1920. He received his PhD on Oriental History from Harvard University, USA.

His entire life has been devoted to bringing Iranian peoples together and writing about their common culture and achievements. He has lived and taught in Afghanistan, Iran and Tajikistan, as well as Ossetia in the north Caucasus. Although primarily concerned with the pre-Islamic period in many writings, he has tried to break down the barrier between scholars working in the ancient world and those concerned with later periods of the Near East.

Among the ground breaking studies the overwhelming importance of Iranians in the development of Islamic civilization in all of its forms persuaded him that the real golden age of Iran was not in the Achaemenid, Sasanian or Safavid periods but in the second to fifth centuries of the Hegira. Islam was changed from an Arab culture based on bedouin mores into a world civilization and faith almost exclusively by Iranians, which astonished him as it had Ibn Khaldoun. He has tried to interpret both Iran and Islam to the rest of the world, including China since his first study of an Oriental language was Chinese. Perhaps in a very few words he can explain his succinct remarks. Asked to characterize Islam as a religion some time ago in California, he replied that it was not the shahada, hajj, namaz, etc. as the basis of Islam, which were forms but not the essence; instead Islam was the religion of two 'ains (Arabic letter): "Putting my hand to my head, he said 'aql (wisdom) and to my heart 'ishq (Love)."