

# Obituaries

## QEYAMUDDIN AHMAD 1930–1998

Professor Qeyamuddin Ahmad, an eminent authority on medieval Indian history and Indo-Muslim society in the nineteenth century, died of a massive heart attack at his home in Patna City on August 27, 1998. He was the last prominent representative of the Bihar school of medievalists nurtured by Sir Jadunath Sarkar and enriched by Professor Syed Hasan Askari, the dean of Bihar medievalists, and with whom Qeyamuddin Ahmad had been associated through much of his career. Few medievalists had as firm a command over the original sources or a stronger knowledge of the Persian and Arabic languages in which they were written than did Professor Ahmad. His death has thus created a major void in the academic world of Bihar and of India.

Qeyamuddin Ahmad was born on September 9, 1930 in a distinguished family of scholars and intellectuals of Patna City. His ancestors were actively engaged in the socioreligious reform movement launched by Sayyid Ahmad of Rae Bareilly, a movement of which he would subsequently become the pre-eminent historian. By the early twentieth century the family took to Western education and Professor Ahmad would come to represent the third generation of his family who taught at Patna University. His son Imtiaz Ahmad, who is currently a Reader in History at Patna University, continues the tradition. Apart from his son, Professor Ahmad is also survived by his wife, Sayeeda.

Qeyamuddin Ahmad received his undergraduate degree from Patna College in 1948, his M.A. from Patna University in 1951, and was awarded the Ph.D. in 1962 from that institution. His dissertation, "The Wahabi Movement in Bihar," was written under the direction of Professor K. K. Datta and was published in 1966 in elaborated form as *The Wahabi Movement in India*. A revised and extended second edition was issued in 1994.

It is his Wahabi scholarship for which Qeyamuddin Ahmad is perhaps best known outside of Bihar and India, but he leaves a rare and productive legacy of scholarship focussing on the local and regional history of Bihar, and most critically on revealing and identifying the records, manuscripts, documents, and other sources on which our understanding of that history is based. Few persons in India or abroad knew the historical record of the Indo-Islamic experience in Gangetic North India and beyond as well as Qeyamuddin Ahmad. Historians for generations to come will be in his debt.

He began his professional career in 1952 as a research fellow of the prestigious K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute in Patna. In 1964 he joined the Department of History of Patna University, a position he filled with notable distinction until his retirement in 1992. At the invitation of his colleagues he continued to take classes informally until the time of his death. Apart from the Wahabi book, Professor Ahmad produced the *Corpus of Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bihar, A. H. 640–1200* (1973) and authored, coauthored, edited, coedited, and translated seven other books. In addition there were well over one hundred articles, essays, and chapters, broad ranging in their subject matter but focussing heavily on the social and cultural history of Bihar.

Professor Ahmad was professionally active at an all-India level, and in 1985 participated in a Colloquium on Muslim Christian Dialogue organized by the Vatican, but ultimately he was content to combine the work of scholarship, teaching, and public service in his home base of Patna and Bihar. His agenda was uncomplicated by intellectual or ideological nuances of the day, whatever they might be; his commitment was rather to a rigorous and open-minded scholarship and to a personal and professional integrity which governed all of his associations. He was in every sense a historian's historian, and a friend and advisor to his students and colleagues. And in the quiet and unassuming manner that characterized everything he did, Qeyamuddin Ahmad always had time for peripatetic students, colleagues and friends from the world beyond Patna, whether their field of interest overlapped his or not.

Professor Ahmad had long been a member of the Mohammedan Education Committee of Patna and from April 1997 was the Secretary of the governing bodies of the Mohammedan Anglo-Arabic School and the Oriental College, which the Committee managed. On the morning of August 27, 1998 he had gone to the Oriental College very near his Patna City home to supervise the installation of computer facilities in the Girls' Section of the College. It was the last thing he did. He died that day, and before completing the paper he was scheduled to present at a symposium in Delhi commemorating fifty years of freedom. That symposium, "Free India: Retrospects and Prospects," was sponsored by the Khuda Baksh Library of Patna, with which Professor Ahmad had also been closely associated. His contribution to our understanding of the fifty years of India's freedom and the history that came before was very large indeed. He will be missed by the students of the Oriental College, those of Patna University, and students of India everywhere. But we are all enriched by his achievements and the legacy he leaves.

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#### YVES RAGUIN, S. J. 1912–1998

Yves Raguin, S.J., returned peacefully to the Lord on December 9, 1998, at Tien Educational Center Taipei. He was born in 1912, entered the Society of Jesus in 1930, and was ordained a priest in 1942. A leading authority on Chinese religion and on spirituality East and West, Fr. Raguin wrote more than 20 books on these topics. Most of them were first written in French and translated into Chinese, English, and several other languages.

Fr. Raguin studied at the Harvard-Yenching Institute in 1946–49 and was in Shanghai during the years 1949–53. After his arrival in Taiwan he took the direction of the Jesuit Dictionary project, which is presently under completion. With other Jesuits, he founded the Taipei Ricci Institute in 1966 and remained its director until November 1996.

The Taipei Ricci Institute mourns its founder. Even more than a scholar, he was a man and a priest whose kindness and wisdom helped an innumerable number of people. The mission to which he dedicated his life was to gain a better understanding of the working of the Holy Spirit within the Chinese culture and also to foster a deeper understanding of the contribution of Chinese spirituality to a broadening of