

= Ahmad Hasan Dani =

Professor Ahmad Hasan Dani ( Urdu : احمد حسن دانی ) FRAS , SI , HI ( 20 June 1920 ? 26 January 2009 ) , was a Pakistani intellectual , archaeologist , historian , and linguist . He was among the foremost authorities on Central Asian and South Asian archaeology and history . He introduced archaeology as a discipline in higher education in Pakistan and Bangladesh . Throughout his career , Dani held various academic positions and international fellowships , apart from conducting archaeological excavations and research . He is particularly known for archaeological work on pre @-@ Indus Civilization and Gandhara sites in Northern Pakistan . He was also the recipient of various civil awards in Pakistan and abroad . As a prolific linguist , he was able to speak 35 local and international languages and dialects .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early life = = =

Dani , an ethnic Kashmiri , was born on 20 June 1920 in Basna , Central Provinces , India . He graduated in 1944 , with an MA degree , to become the first Muslim graduate of Banaras Hindu University . He scored highest marks in the exams which earned him a Gold Medal . This also qualified him for a teaching fellowship from the same university . Although he was provided with the grant , he was not allowed to teach due to his religious beliefs . He stayed there for six months . In 1945 , he started working as a trainee in archaeology under the guidance of Mortimer Wheeler . At this time , he participated in excavations at Taxila and Mohenjo @-@ daro . He was subsequently posted at the Department of Archaeology of British India at Taj Mahal , Agra . He received his PhD from the Institute of Archaeology , University College London .

= = = Career = = =

After the Partition of India , Dani migrated to East Pakistan . There , in 1947 ? 49 he worked as Assistant Superintendent of the Department of Archaeology . At this time , he renovated the Verandra Museum at Rajshahi . In 1949 , he married Safiya Sultana . Together , they had three sons ( Anis , Navaid and Junaid ) and a daughter ( Fauzia ) . In 1950 , Dani was promoted to the position of Superintendent @-@ in @-@ Charge of Archaeology . In the same year , he became General Secretary of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan in Dhaka . Later on , in 1955 , he took the position of President of the National Committee for Museums in Pakistan . For a period of twelve years ( 1950 ? 62 ) , Dani remained Associate Professor of History at the University of Dhaka while at the same time working as curator at the Dhaka Museum . During this period , he carried out archaeological research on the Muslim history of Bengal .

Dani moved to the University of Peshawar in 1962 as Professor of Archaeology and remained there until 1971 . During this time , he led the resetting and renovation works for the Lahore and Peshawar Museums . He became Chairman of the Research Society at the University of Peshawar in 1970 . In 1971 , he moved to the University of Islamabad to become Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences . He left the post in 1975 to concentrate on research as Professor of History . Meanwhile , the university was renamed Quaid @-@ e @-@ Azam University in 1976 . He continued to work in various positions until his retirement in 1980 when he was made Emeritus Professor . During this period , he also served as President of the Archaeological and Historical Association of Pakistan ( 1979 ) and Co @-@ Director of the Pak @-@ German Team for Ethnology Research in Northern Areas of Pakistan ( 1980 ) .

He received an Honorary Doctorate from Tajikistan University , ( Dushanbe ) in 1993 . During the same year , Dani established the Islamabad Museum . In 1992 , he was appointed Advisor on archaeology to the Ministry of Culture of Pakistan , serving from 1992 ? 96 . Between 1994 ? 98 , he remained Chairman of the National Fund for Cultural Heritage in Islamabad . In 1997 , Dani became

Honorary Director at the Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations . He held the position until the time of his death .

On 22 January 2009 , he was admitted to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences in Islamabad with heart , kidney and diabetes problems . He died on 26 January 2009 at the age of 88 years . He is buried in the H @-@ 11 Graveyard of Islamabad .

= = Visiting , research and honorary positions = =

During his Associate Professorship at Dhaka University , Dani worked as a Research Fellow at the School of Oriental and African Studies , University of London ( 1958 ? 59 ) . Later , in 1969 he became Asian Fellow at the Australian National University , Canberra . In 1974 , he went to the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia as a visiting scholar . In 1977 , he was Visiting Professor at the University of Wisconsin ? Madison . Over the span of his career , Dani was awarded honorary fellowships by the Royal Asiatic Society of Bangladesh ( 1969 ) , the German Archaeological Institute ( 1981 ) , the Istituto Italiano per l 'Africa e l 'Oriente ( IsMEO ) ( 1986 ) , and the Royal Asiatic Society ( 1991 ) .

In 1991 , Dani was made an Honorary Citizen of Bukhara and an Honorary Member of the Paivand Society in Tajikistan . He was made an Honorary Life Patron of the Al @-@ Shifa Trust , Rawalpindi , in 1993 .

= = Research contributions = =

Dani remained engaged in excavation works on the pre @-@ Indus Civilization site of Rehman Dheri in Northern Pakistan . He also made a number of discoveries of Gandhara sites in the Peshawar and Swat Valleys , and worked on Indo @-@ Greek sites in Dir . From 1980 , he was involved in research focusing on the documentation of the rock carvings and inscriptions on ancient remains from the Neolithic age up to the late Buddhist period in the high mountain region of Northern Pakistan along with Karl Jettmar , Volker Thewalt and ( much later , since 1989 ) Harald Hauptmann of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences , University of Heidelberg . In 1990 ? 91 , he led the UNESCO international scientific teams for the Desert Route Expedition of the Silk Road in China and the Steppe Route Expedition of the Silk Road in the Soviet Union .

From his extensive fieldwork and research experience , Dani refuted any influence of South Indian culture on the Indus Valley Civilization . Using a geographic perspective of the socio @-@ political systems and cultural distribution of the Indus Basin and surrounding hinterland , he observed that the Indo @-@ Gangetic Plain did not play any significant role in the development of Indus Valley culture . Nor was there any invasion from the seaside during the Bronze Age , although the coastline facilitated maritime trade . The major influence , according to Dani , came from Central Asia in the west . He asserted that the hilly western borderland that appears as a boundary to the external eye is actually a network of hill plateaus where the local people have always moved freely . He therefore argued that the cultural history of Pakistan is more closely related to Central Asia through Buddhist , Persian and later Sufi influences . He strove to revive this relationship by promoting organisations such as the Pak @-@ Central Asia Friendship Association .

Dani maintained that despite the Arabian Sea allowing the Meluhans to establish trade relations with Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt , the majority of historical movements occurred between Central and South Asia . The geographic location as a link between the two regions has characterised the relationship " between the people of Pakistan and those of Central Asia in the field of culture , language , literature , food , dress , furniture and folklore " .

= = Awards and honours = =

The first Muslim student of Banaras Hindu University , Dani scored highest in the graduation exams and received the J. K. Gold Medal from that university in 1944 . Among other national awards , he received Sitara @-@ e @-@ Imtiaz in 1969 , Aizaz @-@ e @-@ Kamal in 1992 and Hilal @-@ e

@-@ Imtiaz in 2000 from the Government of Pakistan . In 2004 , he was awarded the title of ' Distinguished National Professor ' by the Higher Education Commission in recognition of his contributions and achievements .

Internationally , his contributions to archaeology , linguistics and ancient history were commended through various prestigious honours and awards such as :

1998 Légion d'honneur , President of the French Republic

1997 Aristotle Silver Medal , UNESCO

1996 Order of the Merit , Government of Germany

1994 Knight Commander , Government of Italy

1990 Palmes Academiques , Government of France

1986 Gold Medal , Asiatic Society of Bangladesh

= = Publications = =

Dani had more than 30 published books and numerous journal articles to his credit . He spoke 35 languages and dialects , and was fluent in Bengali , French , Hindi , Kashmiri , Marathi , Pashto , Persian , Punjabi , Sanskrit , Saraiki , Sindhi , Tamil , Turkish , English and Urdu languages . He also published various texts in most of these languages .

= = = Books = = =

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Prehistory and Protohistory of Eastern India : With a Detailed Account of the Neolithic Cultures . K. L. Mukhopadhyay . 1960

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With V. M. Masson ( eds . ) , History of Civilizations of Central Asia , UNESCO , Paris . 1992 ? ( 6 volumes ) ISBN 92 @-@ 3 @-@ 102719 @-@ 0 ( v.1 )