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Final Attempt to Revive Caravan of Dialogue During the Cold War: (Travelling with A. H. Dani in China and Soviet Central Asia)

ABSTRACT

It has been recognized by some academics that Prof. Dani was the father of Pakistan archaeology, but this essay identifies him as the father of a brand-new Silk Road studies which is characterized by Prof. Ahmad H. Dani's efforts to revive an inter-civilization, inter-faith and inter-value dialogues on the Silk Roads during the last two years of the Cold War. Prof. Dani was the scientific leader of three UNESCO Desert, Steppe and Maritime expeditions. Being a journalist at that time, the author travelled with him along the three routes, studying and reporting on the Silk Road archaeology. Most of the chapters of the essay are diaries of the author's travels with Prof. Dani on the roads.

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Introduction

Opening a metal cabinet hidden behind the bookshelves in Ahmad Hassan Dani Library in Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations at QAU, there were stacks of unorganized manuscripts scattered around inside. I took out a stack of manuscripts from it, and a notebook fell on the ground. On the cover of the notebook was written "My Journey to Europe". I opened the diary and found that it was written by Professor Dani when he went to study in England in 1953. Professor Dani's first diary entry begins: "I am going to Europe for the first time in my life. With me is my family, including my wife Safiya Sultana, and two little children".

The discovery of the unpublished manuscript of Prof. Dani surprised some academics. Prof. Dani published at least 35 books during his lifetime. According to the statistics of Prof. Dani's books sold on the Goodreads Book Network, Prof. Dani has at least, 45 different books being sold on this website.

I first met Prof. Dani just two years before the taking place of the two ironic "events in world history". These two events were the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. The United States and the West launched the Cold War because of the victory of the Soviet Union and the Chinese revolution, which brought a crisis to the Western colonial system, and finally led to its collapse. In order to maintain the discourse system established from the colonial period, the United States and the West are very worried that the emerging countries in the South would seek independent expression of discourse and demand equal dialogue between the East and the West both politically and culturally.



The author with Prof. A. H. Dani on the bank of Indus in Oct.1990, photo by Yi Huimin

Prof. Dani is best remembered by the international community for leading the UNESCO Silk Road expedition to northwest China and the Soviet Central Asian republics in 1990 and 1991, regardless of the sanctions and opposition against China and the Soviet Union by the Cold War. China's Xinjiang and Soviet Central Asia are the two regions connecting East Asia to the east, Siberia to the north and the Mediterranean countries to the west. With the support of most of the member states, the UNESCO assembly passed a resolution, starting the "silk road comprehensive research project—dialogue", aims to inspire the world of human silk road heritage as a symbol of universal culture and universal value, rediscover and understanding "the road between east and west", " to rediscover the lost clues of human relations, and once again open the road of peaceful contact between east and west, to strengthen the human understanding in all areas.

Launched by UNESCO in 1988 as part of the World Decade for Cultural Development, the Silk Roads, Roads of Dialogue program has helped to highlight the shared heritage of the peoples of the Eurasian continent. The UNESCO caravan of dialogues held five expeditions between 1990 and 1995: Desert Route from Xian to Kashgar in China (20 July - 3 August 1990), Maritime Route from Venice to Osaka (13 October 1990 - 9 March 1991), Steppe Route across Central Asia (18 April - 17 June 1991), Nomad Route across Mongolia (10 July - 5 August 1992) and Buddhist Route (21-30 September 1995). Despite his old age, Professor Danny tried to revive the ancient Silk Road cultural network connecting Eurasia in East Asia, Central Asia, West Asia and South Asia, rebuilding the cultural ties between China, the Soviet Union and the rest of the world, and breaking through the boundaries of the value camps started by the Cold War. Prof. Dani was the scientific leader of the first three expeditions. Being a journalist and a scholar, I travelled with Prof. Dani along the three main routes: the desert, the Steppes and the Sea routes, studying and reporting on the Silk Road archaeology. In order to popularize the knowledge of the Silk Road, whether in the Hexi Corridor, Tarim Basin, or in Bukhara and Samarkand, Prof. Dani made good use of various archaeological sites and museums to promote the Silk Road civilization and belief dialogue and public education through the media.

Before UNESCO launched the Silk Road expedition project in late 1980s, there were only a handful of Chinese scholars studying the Silk Road and the Chinese public knew little about the history, trade and pilgrimage ties between China and Pakistan and other countries. Before the launch of the UNESCO Silk Roads, the Chinese public knew little about the Silk Roads, and ignorant about the culture and history of other side of Karakorum mountains. I only found one Chinese book "Introduction to Integrated

Scientific Investigation on Karakorum and Kunlun Mountains” which mentions briefly the Sino-Pakistan expedition to the southern flanks of Karakorum Range from Kunjirap Pass to Besham, a total distance of 600km in 1989 (Pan, 1992). But during the British rule in India, the British funded a large number of missionaries, spies, scholar journalists and explorers to write a large number of books about the Karakorum, Hindu Kush, Gilgit, Baltistan, Ladakh and Kashmir. Western colonizers had a huge impact on the cultural and historical narrative of the Western Himalayas, from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kashmir, India to China’s Xinjiang and Tibet, which in turn reinforced confusion and divisions in the colonized countries' identities and self-images.

Prof. Dani was the first Muslim student from Banaras Hindu University and got his master's degree with first rank. But his religious beliefs did not allow him to teach there. In 1945, he helped Sir Mortimer Wheeler to excavate the ruins of Mohenjo-Daro. Subsequently, he participated in the archeology of the Taj Mahal in Agra, British India. In 1955, he received his PhD from the Department of Archeology, University of London. After the partition of India and Pakistan, Prof. Dani served as Director of the Archeology Department of East Pakistan (Bengal) from 1950 to 1962, Prof. of History at the University of Dhaka and Curator of the Dhaka Museum. He also served as Chairman of the National Council of Pakistan Museums. With the support of President Muhammad Ayub Khan, Dani founded the Department of Archeology at the University of Peshawar in the 1960s and became the first professor in the department. From the 1960s, Prof. Dani began researching Greco-Indian ruins in northern Pakistan. In the ancient city of Taxila, he found that descendants of Alexander the Great's army mixed with the locals, embraced Buddhism, and built statues and temples with obvious Hellenistic traces. In 1971, he established the Department of Social Sciences at the Quaid i Azam University (QAU). He also excavated the famous pre-Indus Civilization site Rehman Dheri in northern Pakistan (Dani, 1970). Beginning in 1978, he and his German colleagues investigated, along the Karakoram Highway, and discovered the 60-kilometer long art corridor of Buddhist and pre-Buddhist periods petroglyphs. Prof. Dani also discovered many Gandhara ruins in Peshawar, the Swat Valley and the Chakdara area of Dir district. In 1993, he established the Islamabad Museum. In 1997, Prof. Dani became the founding director of the Institute of Asian Civilizations in Taxila.

Prof. Dani's research shows that the main influence on ancient Pakistan came from Central Asia to the west and north. He asserts that what appears to be a border between the hilly west and the Snowy Mountains to the north

is actually a network of hilly plateaus where people from Central Asia have been moving freely. He believes that Pakistan's cultural history is more closely related to Central Asia through the influence of Buddhism, Persia and later Sufism. Today's Institute of Asian Civilizations in Taxila was founded in the beginning as Pakistan Research Center of Central Asian. When the "Journal of Asian Civilizations" was founded by Prof. Dani in 1978, it was called "Journal of Central Asia" instead of "Journal of South Asia", which indicates the Prof. Dani's geographical and cultural perspective in his research of the history of Pakistan's ancient civilization.

Professor Dani not only studied the ancient relations between Pakistan and the north, but also actively promoted the reopening of the road of Pakistan leading to the north — the traditional road leading to China and the Soviet Union. By reading his research and listening to his talks, I found that Prof. Dani believed that Pakistan's religious, cultural, historical, and commercial exchanges with Central Asia and China, in the north, had the greatest impact on ancient Pakistan, rather than with southern India or western Arabia. With extensive fieldwork and research, Prof. Dani found that, as the crossroads of Central Asia, West Asia and South Asia, Pakistan is a key link connecting these regions, which is embodied in the areas' languages, culture, religion, literature, food, clothing, furniture, and folklore. Prof. Dani observed the socio-political system and cultural distribution of the Indus River Valley and its surrounding hinterland, from a geographical perspective, and found that the Indo-Gangetic Plain did not play important role in the development of the Indus Valley civilization (Khan, 1998).

Prof. Dani works show that the main major influence on ancient Pakistan came from Central Asia, not from the south. According to his research, the boundary between the western hills and the northern snowy mountains, was a network of hilly and plateau roads, where the Central Asians had been traveling freely. Prof. Dani believed that the religious, cultural, historical and commercial exchanges between Pakistan and northern Central Asia and China had the greatest influence on ancient Pakistan, rather than with southern India or western Arabia. Through extensive field trips and research, Professor Dani found that Pakistan, as a crossroads of Central, West and South Asia, is a key link connecting these regions, which is reflected in the languages and cultures of the region.

To reconnect the dead corridor of Asian civilizations, Dani attached special importance to Karakorum's links between China, Central Asia and Gandhara. Since the birth of the modern Pakistani state under the name of Islam, both the Islamic ideological narrative and the secular narrative of modernity need a nation building based on historical archaeology. Prof. Dani

in his narrative of Pakistan's five millennium history emphasizes that the Karakorum Mountains and the Indus Valley civilization are different from India in the South. In order to develop Pakistan's historical, cultural and national identity, Dani founded the *Journal of Ancient Pakistan* and *Journal of Central Asia* (later renamed *Journal of Asian Civilization*). The implicit agenda is that Pakistan is more like a Central Asian state, or an ancient country at the cross-roads of Central-South Asia, Hindu Kush-Karakorum-Himalaya, the Indian Ocean-Arab Sea-Persian Gulf. If we read Dani's work more carefully, I feel that Pakistan is entitled to be an "Indus country". The sites of ancient Gandhara, Bon and Tibetan Buddhism can be found from Chitral, Gilgit-Baltistan all the way to Ladakh along the Upper Indus while the "Homeland of five Rivers" in Punjab in the middle reaches of Indus and Mohenjo-Daro have countless sites of Harappa civilizations. For example, since the time of Zhang Zhung (象雄), Tibet has had close exchanges with Persia through this narrow strip of land in northern Pakistan. The Buddha statues and Tibetan inscriptions and Buddha carvings from Chitral, Gilgit, Hunza to Skardu, show that pilgrims from both Central China and from Tibet travelled along the passages between Indus through Karakorum Mountains to Wakhan Corridor and then went to Persia or to Central Asia. Since ancient times, the Karakoram Mountains have been the only route for major trade routes and pilgrims from China and Tibet to Central Asia, West Asia and South Asia. The various mountain passes in the Karakorum Mountains are pilgrim corridors for Buddhists from the Central Plains, Tibet, and Mongolia, and are also gateways for Muslims from China's western provinces to make pilgrimages to Mecca.

Prof. Dani was one of the first scholars to conduct field research along the Karakorum Highway. I have kept his earlier mimeographed lecture notes reporting his archaeological work on the Upper Indus Valley. In the planning of UNESCO Desert Route Expedition, he tried to organize scholars from China, Pakistan, India and other countries to conduct a joint international expedition from Kashgar to Gilgit by crossing Kunjrap Pass. The UNESCO Desert Silk Road Expedition was originally planned to cross the China-Pakistan border between Xi'an and Gilgit in the summer of 1990, traveling along the Karakorum Highway. But due to Indian opposition, it was later shortened between Xi'an and Kashgar and had to be restricted to Chinese territory, not crossing the Karakorum border into Pakistan.

Dani and UNESCO Silk Roads Expeditions: For Chinese academics, Prof. Dani has been remembered for most of his role in leading the UNESCO Silk Road expedition team to China's northwest provinces and Soviet Central Asia Republics, respectively, in 1990 and 1991, and the area which connected China in the east with Soviet Siberia in the north and the Mediterranean countries in the west. Prof. Dani and UNESCO SILK ROADS project coordinator, Dr. Doudou Diene launched the expeditions with an aim at

revitalizing East-West dialogue at a time when U.S. and its western allies were engaged in Cold War and particularly in a West's joint political and economic sanction against China after 1989 Tiananmen protests.



(The author with Prof. Dani in the Soviet Central Asia between April–July, 1991), photo by Liu Wenmin

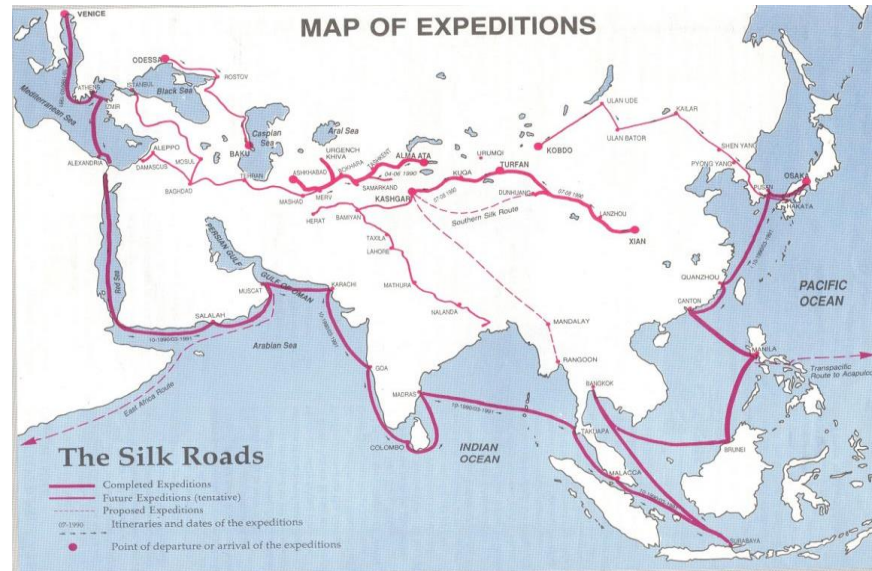
With the support of the majority of member countries, UNESCO General Assembly passed a resolution of launching the “Project for the Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue” to stimulate worldwide interest in the Silk Roads heritage of mankind as a symbol of universal cultural interchange, rediscovering and understanding “the peaceful paths of contact between east and west” , with an aim to “rediscover the lost threads of human relations” and open up, once again, these peaceful paths of contact between east and west for the intensification of human understanding in all fields of life” (Frank, 1990).

The first time I met Prof. Dani, and started a friendship between generations, was 33 years ago after he was unanimously elected by the international academic community as the chief scientist of the UNESCO Silk Road Project and became the leading international academic of promoting contemporary Silk Road studies starting from China.

Regardless of his advanced age, Prof. Dani led the Silk Road Desert Route Expedition from Xian to Kashgar and the Steppe Route expedition in Soviet Central Asia. Prof. Dani tried to revive the ancient Silk Road cultural network of Eurasian land from East Asia, Central Asia, West Asia and South Asia, rebuilding the cultural links between Soviet Union, China and the rest of world. Prof. Dani not only studied the ancient relationship between Pakistan

and China, but also actively promoted the re-opening the roads of Pakistan to the north—the traditional road to China and the Soviet Union. The UNESCO Desert Silk Route Expedition was originally planned between Xian and Gilgit by crossing China-Pakistan border and travelled along Karakorum Highway in the summer of 1990. But due to the opposition of India, it was later shortened between Xian and Kashgar and had to be confined to Chinese territory without crossing Karakorum border into Pakistan.

I joined the UNESCO expeditions as a Young Scholar. The scientific leader of the expeditions was Prof. Ahmad Hassan Dani, the chief scientist of UNESCO Comprehensive Study of the Silk Roads, who led us on the Desert Road, the Maritime Road and the Steppe Road. I was at that time a reporter with Xinhua News Agency. Prof. Ahmed Hassan Dani and Dr. Doudou Diene, coordinator of UNESCO's Silk Roads Comprehensive Study Project recommended me be the UNESCO Silk Roads Young Scholar travelling with all the four expeditions (Desert Route between Xian and Kashgar, Maritime Route between Venice and Osaka, Steppe Route between Ashkhabad and Almaty in Soviet Central Asia, Altai Nomadic Route between Ulan Bator and Kovid in Mongolia). They gave me the task of recording and reporting all the four routes expeditions of the Silk Road on a daily basis.



UNESCO official map of its Silk Roads four routes (desert, maritime, steppe and Altai) exception between 1990 and 1992.

Between July 1990 and July 1991, I traveled with Prof. Dani as a journalist and a student on the three major routes of desert, grassland and sea studying the Silk Roads and Buddhist archeology. Being one of the few students of learning from Prof. Ahmad Hassan Dani on the Silk Roads, I tried to grasp every possible opportunity to learn from Prof. Dani when I travelled with him on a ship exploring the Maritime Silk Route or in a bus or a bazaar on Desert route of Xinjiang or in a yurt or a jeep on the steps of Soviet Central Asia. In order to spend more time with him, I walked or sat closer to him during our journey, listening to his travelling talks. It was always very late when we stopped to check into a hotel in Soviet Central Asia. I followed Chinese teacher-student tradition by assisting Professor Dani carry luggage at night or loading luggage in the morning.

The number of scholars and authors studying Silk Roads have been growing by tens of thousands in China since Chinese leader Chairman Xi Jinping proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013. But 33 years ago, there were only a handful of academics who were studying the Silk Roads in China and the world. The public knew very little about the historical, trade and pilgrim links between China, Pakistan and beyond.

In order to make the academics being aware, but also to educate the public about the Silk Roads through our expeditions, after departure from Xian and starting travelling to Gansu from Tianshui(天水) to Dunhuang through Hexi Corridor (河西走廊) on the eastern edge of Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau and Taklamakan Desert, the only connection of central China with the north-west provinces of steppes, deserts and oases, Prof. Dani gave me interview almost at every stop and site of our expedition. Based on these interviews, I gave extensive coverage of Buddhist rock cave murals from Maijishan Grottos (麦积山) and the Dunhuang Mogao Caves (莫高窟, which are also known as the Thousand Buddha Grottoes in Gansu, to the Bezeklik Thousand Buddha Caves and Kizil Caves of the Thousand Buddhas in Tarim Basin of Xinjiang.

On August 20, 1990, when UNESCO concluded its desert route expedition in Urumqi in Xinjiang, Prof. Dani gave a presentation of his expedition and findings in Upper Indus River along Karakorum Highway in 1980s. He reported that on both sides of the Upper Indus River, he and German colleagues found a large number of inscriptions of various languages carved on the rocks, including Chinese inscriptions. Chinese inscriptions usually consist of one to twelve characters. The longest inscription translated into modern Chinese is: "Gu Weilong, the envoy Great Wei sent to the Mimi Kingdom (大魏使谷魏龙今向迷密使去)." ."

My reporting of Prof. Dani's findings via Xinhua News Agency were carried by various media in China and around the world, making Chinese know, for the first time, that the Indus River was not only part of the network of the Silk Road but, most importantly, that Chinese realize that the Indus

Valley network of roads was Chinese gateway to the outside world. After traveling on the ancient Silk Road for more than 30 years since then, I decided to officially enroll at the Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations as a Ph.D. student and doing my writing and research in the quiet reading room of Prof. Dani Library, which houses all the books donated by Prof. Dani's family.

The following is an excerpt from the diary of my study with Prof. Dani on the Silk Road, which records some of Prof. Dani's activities and conversations. He was the scientific leader of the UNESCO Silk Road Study expedition from July 1990 to August 1991 on three routes - the desert route from Xi'an to Kashgar, the sea route from Venice to Osaka (Dani had to disembark in Karachi because India refused to issue him a visa for our next stop in Goa and the steppe route from Ashgabat to Almaty.

Excerpts from Xi'an-Kashgar Desert Route Diary: At 8:30 a.m. on July 23, 1990, the departure ceremony began with the sound of firecrackers, gongs and drums. Nearly a hundred actors holding bouquets of ribbons and wearing colorful costumes performed cheerful Yangko dance and other folk dances. Sun Daren, the deputy governor of Shaanxi Province, presented the flag to the expedition team and issued each expedition member a red satin pass-Qixin signed by Bai Qingcai(白清才), the governor of Shaanxi Province. This is a customs clearance document from the Han Dynasty, with the photo of "Letter from Captain Zhangye" (张掖都尉启信) unearthed in Gansu, which is said to be the earliest "passport" in the world.



UNESCO Desert Route expedition started in Xian on July 23, Prof. Dani holding the banner of the expedition Photo by Xinhua

Prof. Dani, scientific leader of the expedition said: "At the starting point of the Silk Road, where the envoys who pioneered the Silk Road set out two thousand years ago, we will embark on a journey westward, which means that we have buried here the seeds of peace and laid the cornerstone of friendship among mankind. We will do our best to contribute to this cause."

Standing in front of the Daqin Nestorianism monument in Xi'an, Prof. Dani said, "it is this spirit of tolerance, which recognizes different cultures and different values, that has made the exchange of different civilizations between the East and the West possible."

Leaving the Terracotta Warriors and Horses of Qin Shihuang (秦始皇), the first Chinese emperor of Qin Dynasty, we came to Huaqing Pool (华清池) where Concubine Yang (杨贵妃) of the Tang Dynasty bathed. Prof. Dani, the scientific team leader, said, "According to Pakistani canons, we must wash off the dust on our bodies before going to Mecca for pilgrimage. We cannot bring the dust on our bodies to the Silk Road."

July 25, 1990, in the morning, our team visited Maiji Mountain (麦积) in Gansu. Maiji Mountain belongs to the Yellow River basin, with 10 kilometers away to the Yangtze River.

It was here that the Gandhara music, dance, painting and sculpture were introduced into inner land of China and were accepted and absorbed by Chinese artist. The Gandhara Buddhist art which was introduced from Pakistan found its home in the four grottoes in Dunhuang, Maiji, Yungang and Longmen in northern China and Central China. Among them, Maijishan Grottoes have preserved more than 7,200 sculptures, known as the "Oriental Sculpture Museum", and become a part of the world's cultural heritage.



One of hundreds of news stories by the author while travelling with Prof. Dani

Prof. Dani leads UNESCO expedition travelling between Shanxi and Gansu photo by the author Maiji Mountain is located at the western end of the Qinling Mountains, at 1,747 meters above sea level. Surrounded by peaks, lush trees. In the drizzle, the young and old members of the expedition team climbed ladders of 70 or 80 meters above the ground, and carefully observed the grottoes built on the cliffs.

In Cave 19, there is a Buddha statue guarded by two lions. Chinese scholars have not known the identity for many years. It is also the only unidentified lion-guarded Buddha statue in Maijishan Grottoes. Professor Dani identified it and said, " This is the God of Protection." Prof. Dani explained that the Buddha knelt on his knees and held the lotus flowers with his two arms. And the two lions are symbols of the Sakya tribe in India.

In the afternoon, we left Tianshui for Lanzhou in the misty drizzle and entered a Grand Canyon, which was located in the county seat of Qin'an. Nearly 50,000 people came to street to look at us when the international team passed through the town.

Sitting in the first row of our car was Dr. Doudou Deean, the international coordinator of the expedition. He was a black man from Senegal. The welcoming crowd in Qin'an county was the first time in their life to see a black man from Africa, and they kept cheering to him happily. Local young children and young women gave him a friendly laugh. Deean was amused to sit in the car and see it all, and he kept greeting them.

According to the director of the Gansu Provincial Museum, 700 black people before 1000 AD traveled the Silk Road desert route to China to sell ivory and do other businesses. Many black African terracotta figures have been unearthed in the Tang tombs near Xi'an. Deean was the first black man to restart the Silk Road over the last 1,000 years.



Prof. Dani visits Mogao caves in Dunhuang, Gansu, photo by the author

August 2, 1990, the expedition team arrived in Dunhuang, which is located at the westernmost end of the Hexi Corridor. In the Tang Dynasty, the merchants, pilgrims and envoys traveling to and from the Central Asia and Pakistan had to rest in Dunhuang. Buddhist monks and followers have carved thousands of temples on the eastern cliff surface of the nearby Mingsha Mountain, looking like a dense beehive. After the 11th century AD, the importance of Dunhuang declined that it was forgotten by the world. It was not until the beginning of this century that a secret room with ancient books and prints was found in the grottoes that Dunhuang again captured world attention.



Prof. Dani stops at Hexi Corridor on the way to Xinjiang, photo by the author

In 1907, the British explorer Aurel Stein took away a large number of manuscripts from here, including the world-famous printed "Diamond Sutra" (《金刚经》) by carving in 868 AD. This printing was a few centuries earlier than the Western use of printing and paper, making it the earliest printed book in the world. Following Stein's "findings", Explorers from France, Russia, Germany, and Japan came and took away countless ancient documents which are now scattered around the world, mainly in London, Paris and St. Petersburg.

Duan Wenjie (段文杰), director of the Dunhuang Art Research Institute, gave an interview to me in his office full of books. Mr. Duan came to the Mogao Grottoes as early as 1946. Under the extremely difficult living and working conditions, he initiated the cause of Dunhuang art research. Professor Duan focused on the influence of western art on Dunhuang murals.

"Both Buddhism and Buddhist art were introduced into China from places like ancient Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Dunhuang frescoes are directly influenced by the content, form and expression technique of the Qiuci frescoes, and the Qiuci frescoes are directly transmitted from ancient Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Buddhist art in Pakistan and Afghanistan has also absorbed the nourishment of ancient Greek art. China absorbed Gandhara art. Cao Buxing(曹不兴) was the first Chinese painter of Buddhist images. He was a painter of the Three Kingdoms period and he painted Buddha by copying Gandhara art. But from the very beginning, Dunhuang painters worked with a Chinese style, forming starting a Chinese Buddhist art," he said.

"Dunhuang frescoes learn from foreign art mainly manifested in two aspects, one is to learn from foreign human anatomy, the other is to absorb the method of Gandhara. If we compare the tomb paintings in Central China in the same period with the Dunhuang murals, it can be found that the figures in Central China have wide robes and large sleeves, simple shape, and do not pay attention to the human anatomy. However, the Dunhuang mural figures are mostly nude or naked, and the description is exquisite, and the human body proportion and anatomy are more accurate, so they have a strong sense of reality. Why the Chinese painters have such a big difference during the same period? The fundamental reason is that Chinese painting and Gandhara art centered on Greece belong to two different systems. China is called by freehand brushwork, and the Hellenistic art is good at realism".

Chinese and foreign scholars held an academic seminar at Dunhuang. At the end of the seminar, the delegates unanimously raised their hands and proposed that UNESCO should launch a worldwide campaign to protect Dunhuang by building an international cooperation mechanism to deepen the study of Dunhuang studies. Science leader Dani said he will propose a specific plan to UNESCO to help China get back the lost Dunhuang relics and other relics of the Silk Road. Prof. Dani urged the countries that possess them to provide copies and related materials to China.

Scholars from all over the world also learned at today's seminar that there are six Uighur wooden movable characters in Dunhuang Museum, which may be the earliest movable type characters in the world. The six movable characters are made of hardwood in different sizes and carved with a knife. According to research, the creation of these six movable types is probably in the 13th century. China is the first country in the world to use movable type printing, but the physical objects have disappeared in the Central Plains. Chinese and foreign scholars have expressed great interest in finding the physical evidence of movable type printing in the Mogao Grottoes. The Uighur language is in the ancient Uyghur language. Experts believe that the discovery of the Uighur wooden movable type in Dunhuang proves that movable type printing had spread westward to Central Asia as early as the Yuan Dynasty, which was a great contribution of the Han and Uygur people to the world civilization.

During today's visit, Professor Jacques Giès, director of the Musée national des arts asiatiques-Guimet, saw the world's only mural reflecting the Huayan Sutra (《华严经》) in a cave of Dunhuang. The Huayan Sutra, which was created in Central Asia, is the most important and immortal work among the Buddhist classics. In the 8th century, Huayan was banned by a Chinese emperor and devastated in China. Temples in the two capitals—Chang'an and Luoyang were destroyed. Huayan only survived in Korea and Japan. But strangely, the earliest illustrated Huayan Sutra was the late 18th-century murals found in Korea. "The painting of the Huayan Sutra found in Dunhuang is a vivid masterpiece of the Buddhist classics and will help understand the history of Buddhism in the heyday of the Tang Dynasty," Gies said.

August 10, 1990, we arrived at Kuche (库车), the home of Qiuci (龟兹) city founded by the Aryan people 22,000 years ago, and the first stop for the introduction of Buddhism into China from ancient Pakistan. Xuanzang (玄奘), the eminent monk of the Tang Dynasty, who went to India for Buddhist scriptures passed by Qiuci. His book of the Western Regions of the Tang Dynasty has a detailed record of the customs and people here. About 70 kilometers outside Kuche, Chinese and foreign scholars visited the Kizil Thousand Cave, which is the grotto temple complex of the ancient Qiuci and the earliest grottoes in China, with a total of 236 caves. Seeing the nude dancers depicted by the colorful murals in the cave, their plump body and smooth skin convinced many scholars present that the inhabitants of the country may have crossed the Pamir Plateau from northern Pakistan and Afghanistan into the Tarim basin.



Prof. Dani and UNESCO team arrives at Turfan, Xinjiang, photo by the author

The murals in the Kizil Cave show that in the first century BC, with the introduction of Buddhism, the Gandharan art of Greek origin was also introduced into northwest China. With the influence of Hellenistic art, the art of nude and semi-naked developed throughout the Silk Roads in Chinese North-Western Regions, including Dunhuang and Turpan (吐鲁番). This nude art is combined with sex, which is fully reflected in Qiuci and the Dunhuang murals. Today, in addition to the Thousand Buddha Cave in Kizil, more than 500 caves in Wimbashi (温巴什), Taitaier (台台儿), Kuqa, Kumtura, (库木土拉) Kizilgaha (克孜尔嘎哈), Semsam (森姆萨姆), Mazabak (马扎伯赫) and other places in Baicheng (拜城) of Xinjiang were found which also have vivid and vivid reflection. From Dunhuang to Kizil, the nude or semi-naked murals in the North-Western regions of China, nudity is not only reflected in the life between husband and wife, but also a fashionable dress of women at that time. In addition, in ancient times, the custom of watching young girls dancing naked also prevailed in the North-Western Regions of China. These nude scenes with the influence of Hellenistic art include breast sucking, intimacy, waking up, sleeping, naked breast, milking, providing water, tea, playing flute, tea, providing silk towel after the bath, semi-naked dancing, naked dancing and naked girl, etc.

In the Kizil Cave 10, I saw someone left some writing in Chinese on the bare wall in black ink:

"I read the treasure house of Xinjiang culture from Stein who records rich archaeological wealth of the Western Regions of Xinjiang in ancient works of art, with the new thoughts. Therefore, on June 5, 1946, I came here alone, watching the murals which are full of beautiful things in eyes, and all have noble artistic value. Unfortunately, most of the wall skin was stripped by foreign archaeological teams, which is a great cultural loss. I have tried several oil paintings here. Staying for 14 days. On April 19 the next year, I came here with Zhao Baoqi, Chen Tian, Fan Guoqiang and Sun Bidong. First, we documented 75 caves. Then respectively copy, research, record, photography, digging. End temporarily on June 19. In order to carry forward the ancient culture, beg you visitors take special care and custody!

Han Loran (韩乐然) six-ten (Kizil Caves, n.d.).

According to press, Han Loran is a Korean, who perished with all his works in a plane crash.

The Kuche History Museum showed the team a scroll of ancient documents just excavated at the ancient Qiuci site, written in a special Indo-European language called "Tuhuo Luo" (吐火罗语) used in the ancient Qiuci and Yanqi (焉耆) regions. Geng Shimin (耿世民), a professor at the Central Institute for Nationalities, said that 1,000 years ago, because the Turkic people lived in the area, the literature written in this text was buried under the moving sand and ruins. At the beginning of this century,

archaeologists found a batch of documents written in this ancient script in southern Xinjiang. At first, scholars did not know what it was about, or even the name of the language. After nearly a century of efforts, today, Chinese and foreign scholars have had some understanding of this ancient script. But Ji Xianlin(季羨林) , a professor from Peking University, is the only Chinese scholar who can partially interpret the text. Prof. Dani and Dr. Pran G. Paul said they were willing to cooperate with relevant Chinese universities to help China train experts in this field.

The earliest Buddhist artifacts acquired by the Chinese emperors also came from the State of Qiuci (龟兹) . According to the Book of Liang (《梁书》) , Emperor Wudi (汉武帝) of the Han Dynasty had "a" foreign bath tub (澡罐) ." In the second year of the Yuan Feng (元丰二年) , the Kingdom of Qiuci presented it ". Tang Shimin (唐世民) , an associate researcher at the Xinjiang Institute of Religion, explained: " Bath jars are used by Buddhist monks. Since the State of Qiuci presented this kind of Buddhist artifact to Emperor Wudi of the Han Dynasty, it shows that before two thousand years, Buddhism had been widely distributed in Qiuci, and the bath pot was offered to Emperor Wudi of the Han Dynasty as a valuable gift."

August 14,1990, at 8 PM, the team travelling 4,600 kilometers along the desert route in the scorching sun and sand, wed reached the northwest border city of Kashgar at the foot of the Pamir Plateau, which was the end of the Silk Road Desert route survey in China.



Prof. Dani visits Kizil Caves in southern Xinjiang, photo by the author

In the noise of firecrackers, gongs and drums and suona trumpet, nearly 100 girls and young men with colorful ribbons and colorful Uyghur costumes danced cheerful folk dances to welcome us arriving in Kashgar."We have arrived at the end of the first leg of the journey, and now it is time for us to brush off the dust," Dani said passionately to the happy crowd,

" We stopped a moment in the Kuche Spring of Tears. Today, as we are about to enter this important town along the Silk Road, let us wait for a moment and leave a tear. I hope it will be mixed with your tears, so as to create a new spring of eternal life for the understanding and application of the eastern and Western West."

August 19,1990, we flew from Kashgar to Urumqi and attended the "Silk Road International Academic Symposium". Scholars from various countries reported at the meeting on new discoveries along the ancient Silk Road which connected China, West Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and Siberia. Academician Askalov, president of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences in the Soviet Union, said that he found fragments of silk clothing in 25 tombs south of Uzbekistan, which were made from about 1700 BC to 1500 AD. This shows that there was an ancient trade route between China and Central Asia long before Zhang Qian's westward trip.

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ZZ 李希光
BT 丝绸古道上各国屡有重要考古发现
ZW

新华社乌鲁木齐八月二十日电 (记者李希光) 正在此间召开的“丝绸之路国际学术讨论会”提供的报告显示, 各国考古学家们在联结中国、西亚、南亚、中亚和西伯利亚的丝绸古道上又有许多新的发现。

苏联乌兹别克科学院院长阿斯卡洛夫院士说, 在乌兹别克斯坦以南的二十五座墓穴中他发现了丝绸衣物的碎片。这些衣物的制做年代大约在公元前一千七百年到公元前一千五百年。这表明, 中国与中亚之间早在张骞西行之前就已存在了一条古老的商道。

巴基斯坦中亚文明研究中心主任丹尼教授说, 他领导的一个调查组在印度河两岸发现了大量的刻在岩石上的文字, 其中包括用古汉语写成的碑文。汉文碑文通常由一至十二个字组成, 最长的一篇碑文译为现代汉语为: “派往神秘国大魏的使者谷蠡龙”。这意味着, 印度河流域也是“丝绸之路”交通系统的一部分。

泰国学者塔拉蓬说, 泰国最近发现一枚中国的“铲”钱币和三千汉代的铜镜。这显示, 早在汉代, 泰国就已有中国人的足迹。此外在泰国沿海还发现了大量的中国早期瓷器、中东的玻璃和釉面陶器。这证实, 早在公元九至十世纪, 已出现了途经泰国的中国与中东的海上贸易。

苏联列宁格勒冬宫博物馆的陆柏说, 近年来的考古显示, 古西伯利亚与中国西南部有密切的联系。在西伯利亚南部的一座公元前四世纪的古墓中, 发现有中国铜镜的三菱形彩色丝织物的碎片。其中丝织物的图案类似于长沙马王堆战国时期的发掘物。

在南西伯利亚的另一座古墓中, 发现了两件用棉花做的男衬衣。经鉴定, 这些棉布衬衣是张骞提到的“蜀部来的纺织品。”据考证, 这些物品是通过西南商道从中国西南部到达西伯利亚南部的。

日本奈良考古研究所所长樋口隆康报告说, 早在公元四世纪末, 日本的墓里首次出现有龙凤图案的饰板。这种图案显然通过丝绸之路介绍到日本的。

中国社会科学院考古研究所所长徐苹芳教授说, 近年来, 中国考古学家在中国境内的丝路沿线发现了大量的外国输入的遗物, 如东罗马和阿拉伯的金币, 波斯的银币; 东罗马和波斯的银器; 罗马、波斯和伊斯兰的玻璃, 以及为外销而特制的丝绸。

这些外国遗物在自西安沿线路主干线咸阳、武威、酒泉、敦煌、吐鲁番和喀什都有发现。塔克拉玛干大沙漠中的楼兰古城、于田、和田、以及青海西宁和内蒙古草原等地都有外国遗物的发现。

为期三天的国际丝路讨论会是昨天开幕的。

Xinhua news dispatch (Aug.20,1990) reporting Prof. Dani's finding along Karakorum Highway

Prof. Dani, reported that upon his survey along Karakorum Highway, he found a large number of rock inscriptions on Upper Indus River, including inscriptions written in Chinese. Chinese inscriptions usually consist of 1 to 12 characters. The longest inscription translated into English " Gu Weilong, an envoy of Great Wei is on his way to Mimi." This clearly shows that the Upper Indus River corridor is an important part of the Silk Road system. Thai scholar Tarapon said that Thailand has recently discovered a Chinese "shovel" coin and three bronze mirrors from the Han Dynasty. This shows that, as early as in the Han Dynasty, Thailand already had the footprints of the Chinese people. In addition, a large number of early Chinese porcelain and Middle Eastern glass and glazed pottery have been found along the coast of Thailand. This confirms that as early as the 9th and 10th centuries, there was a maritime trade between China and the Middle East through Thailand.

Lu Bai (陆柏) , of the Leningrad Winter Palace Museum in the Soviet Union, said that archaeological studies in recent years showed that ancient Siberia had close links with southwest China. Fragments of Chinese bronze mirrors and diamond colored silk fabrics were found in a 4th century BC tomb in southern Siberia. The pattern of silk fabric is similar to that of the Warring States Period in Mawangdui (马王堆, Changsha.

In another tomb in South Siberia, two men's shirts made of cotton cloth were found. After identification, these cotton shirts were "textiles from the Shu (蜀) " mentioned by Zhang Qian. According to the research, these items are transported from southwest China through the southwest trade route to southern Siberia. Takashi Takaguchi(桶口隆康), director of the Nara (奈良) Institute of Archaeology, reported that at the end of the 4th century, dragon and phoenix panels, apparently introduced to Japan through the Silk Road.

Professor Xu Pingfang (徐苹芳) , director of the Institute of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said that in recent years, Chinese archaeologists have found a large number of foreign relics along the Silk Road in China, such as gold coins from Eastern Roman and Arab, Persian silver coins; Eastern Roman and Persian silver; Roman, Persian and Islamic glass, and special silk made for export.

These relics were found in Xianyang, Wuwei, Jiuquan, Dunhuang, Turpan and Kashgar. Foreign relics were also found in the ancient city of Loulan, Yutian and Hotan in the Taklimakan Desert, as well as in Xining in Qinghai province and the grasslands in Inner Mongolia. At the end of the visit, Ru Xin (汝信) , vice president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said, " The Silk Road is a road of dialogue. Only through friendly dialogue and exchange of ideas can the estrangement between ethnic groups be eliminated."

Excerpts from diary of Venice-Osaka Maritime Silk Road: At 2 p.m. on November 7, 1990, the "Ark of Salam" began its week-long voyage in the Gulf of Suez, Red Sea and Arabian Sea, a water full of threats of war. At 8:30

a.m. on November 8, 1990, the "The Ark of Salam" arrived at the Ghubir Strait, which is also the chokepoint leading to the Jordanian port of Aqaba and the Israeli port of Eilat. Suddenly, a "P3 Orion" reconnaissance aircraft with the "U.S. Navy" logo swooped towards our ship at a very close distance. In half an hour, the US military plane circled the "The Ark of Salam" four times at a height of only a few dozen meters from the hull, forcing us to stop sailing and wait for the Americans' "aerial inspection." The Omani crew said that three days ago, when the "The Ark of Salam" passed through the Suez Canal, it encountered three US warships following it.

On November 10, 1990, the Ark of Salam passed the Brother Islands. This archipelago includes the North Island and the South Island. The Ark of Salam passed through the strait between the two islands, which is only one nautical mile wide. 40 minutes later, the French Air Force "Atlanta MKI" patrol aircraft appeared on the bow of our ship. The patrol aircraft, equipped with sonar torpedoes and depth charges, flew at close range around our ship for 15 minutes before flying away.

On November 12, 1990, the ship sailed into the Arabian Sea near the Gulf of Aden. At 9 o'clock in the morning, I was suddenly woken up by the ship's loudspeaker announcement from my dream, saying that a US military plane was spotted flying towards our ship.

As a maritime transportation hub in the Gulf region leading to India, the Red Sea and East Africa, Oman has a maritime history of more than 400 years. In recent years, archaeologists from France, Italy and Pakistan have unearthed a large number of Chinese porcelain and coins from before the 10th century on this land. Prof. Dani, Director of the Central Asian Civilization Research Center in Pakistan, said that as early as the 4th century AD, Chinese goods had appeared in the Euphrates River valley; in the 5th century AD, Chinese merchant ships entered the bay and berthed. In the 8th century AD, Jia Dan (贾耽), a great geographer of the Tang Dynasty in China, described in detail the sea route from Guangzhou, China to the Arab world in his "Guangzhou Tonghai Yi Dao" (《广州通海夷道》).

On November 13, 1990, the UNESCO Maritime Silk Road research vessel, the Ark of Salam, concluded its survey in the Red Sea and Arabian Sea and sailed to the Gulf of Oman, which guards the gateway to the Persian Gulf. This is the first UN-flagged ship to sail in this region since the Gulf crisis in August this year and since the UN Security Council passed a series of resolutions sanctioning Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait. Over the past week, U.S. bombers carrying air-to-surface missiles have been circling at close range to track and intimidate our scientific research vessel. The coordinator of UNESCO stationed on the ship has called the Secretary-General of the United Nations and informed through the press that the coastal countries in the waters where the research ship passes and the relevant countries that have deployed troops there should not use force to interfere with the normal

navigation plan of the research ship, to ensure the success of "Silk Road, Road of Dialogue", the largest project in the "Decade of World Culture" activities launched by UNESCO.

In the early morning of November 13, 1990, the winter sun rose like a fireball from the azure Arabian Sea. The tall, bare mountains located on the coastline of Dhofar turn from beige to bronze under the sunlight, and then gradually turn to deep red. At the Arabia Sea we greeted our first morning in the Sultanate of Oman. Oman was the hometown of Sinbad, the great Arab navigator. In the 8th century AD, he sailed to Guangzhou. According to legend, as early as the 9th century AD, Arab merchant ships transported locally abundant dates and horses from the Gulf region to India. They exchanged spices in India and went to China to exchange for the commodities they needed most - silk and ceramics.

On November 17, 1990, we sailed into the Port of Muscat, Oman, studying the Gulf of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz for a week, and then left the Middle East for our study journey in the Indian Ocean. The expedition team will inspect Oman's historic port of Sohar in the Strait of Hormuz. According to research, in the 8th century AD, Sinbad, the great Arab navigator, sailed a sloop from here to Guangzhou, China.

At 8 a.m. on November 19, 1990, the pilot from Port Qasim in Karachi came by speedboat to pilot the Ark of Salam. Dozens of fishing boats covered with colorful ribbons sang and danced towards our ship. The fishermen on the fishing boat were just like the fishermen from other countries we met along the way. They were enthusiastic and unrestrained, not at all like the conservative peoples living on inland. The colorful welcoming team performed a cheerful dance to the accompaniment of loud sounds and drums in the pier square. This is a dirty and messy dock, but full of human touch. Thousands of dock laborers stopped what they were doing and formed a circle in the dock square. Some of them couldn't squeeze into the crowd, so they simply climbed up to the telephone poles to watch us foreigners. Karachi, a city with a population of 10 million, is located in a large triangular bay, separated from the Arabian Sea by a shallow sand reef. Karachi is located at the westernmost end of the Indus Delta, with a hot and dry climate. It is geographically the center connecting the three continents of Europe, Africa and Asia. In this city, you can see black, white and brown people everywhere.

Karachi city was founded in the 18th century. However, according to research, Alexander's admiral once led a fleet to dock in this natural haven for three weeks to avoid the harsh weather. However, the history from 326 BC to the 18th century AD is still hidden behind the black veil of history, waiting to be explored and discovered. In 1729 AD, Karachi was still a small fishing village with only 20 households. In 1839, in order to carry out military expansion in Asia, the British expanded the Port of Karachi into an important

town directly connected to the Suez Canal, and later developed into an important town in military and foreign trade. After Pakistan became independent in 1947, Muslims from the Indian subcontinent poured into the city, causing the population of this former small fishing village to soar to more than 10 million today.

After leaving the pier, we drove into Karachi city. What we saw along the way were dilapidated neighborhoods. We suddenly stepped from the paradise-like oil-rich country of Oman into an oil-poor country with a per capita income of only US\$300. The trucks and buses driving on the streets are inlaid or painted with colorful patterns, but the trains are composed of rows of broken carriages. The train windows have no glass, and passengers stick their bodies out of the doors or windows.

We came to Jinnah Memorial Hall to lay wreaths to the founding father of Pakistan. In front of the memorial square, Pakistani soldiers armed with Chinese-made AK47 automatic rifles cleared other Pakistani tourists, especially those with tattered and dirty clothes, out of the memorial hall to make room for us foreigners. The tourists who were kicked out had to stand and watch from a distance. The Jinnah Museum collects his relics during his lifetime, including the clothes he wore and the daily necessities he used. This kind of worship and respect for the late leader has a strong oriental color and is very humane.

In a large glass display window, there hangs a Chinese painting with a lion that Bai Chongxi (白崇禧) gifted to Jinnah. On it, he wrote in his own handwriting: "Mighty East Asia, His Excellency Governor General Jinnah. Bai Chongxi on September 23, 1947. Marshal Umar of China". The last sentence in English indicates that Bai Chongxi was a Chinese Muslim. The senior member of the Kuomintang government once served as the chairman of the China Muslim Federation.

At 5 a.m. on December 1, 1990, the Pakistani government sent a special plane to transport the expedition team to Sukkur, an ancient city located on the banks of the Indus River, through which the Indus River flows. A large number of senior local dignitaries, including commissioners and senior judges, escorted by armed soldiers, came to the airport to greet us. Prof. Dani explained to us that mafia gangs are active in the area and robberies are often carried out at gunpoint, so soldiers are needed to escort us to the Indus.

Leaving Sukkur, a city built by the Aryans in the 6th century BC, the expedition team drove along the canal road to the center of the Indus River Culture - the ruins of the ancient city of Mohenjo-Daro. Mohenjo-Daro is located 1.6 kilometers east of the Indus River. On one side of the road is the canal and on the other side is the Pakistani desert. On both sides of the road, we saw flocks of migratory birds flying in from Siberia for the winter.

The city of Mohenjo-Daro, built in 3000 BC, was the greatest city in the ancient world and the most representative city in the mature period of Indian civilization. What the ruins show to people is the oldest municipal layout in the world. It is unprecedented in history. This city with an area of 40 square kilometers and once home to 200,000 people is entirely composed of red brick buildings. Straight roads and alleys cut the city into countless small blocks. The perfection of urban planning amazes today's architects. Those two- and three-story residential buildings, public facilities and public baths, as well as the underground sewage system unique to Indian civilization, can still serve as models for today's urban planners to follow.

Prof. Dani who worked on excavations here in 1949, said that during six months of excavation, he discovered a huge granary. He believed that urban residents were mainly engaged in farming at that time, and the Indus River was used for irrigating this land. But Prof. Dani said that he has not yet figured out the social system and organizational form of this 5,000-year-old city. Based on the well-ordered buildings and streets excavated so far, Prof. Dani speculates that a highly centralized country may have existed here.

Over the past 10 years, Prof. Dani has investigated a large number of inscriptions on rocks and bronzes found in Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus River areas. So far, more than 5,000 inscriptions have been found in the Indus Valley. Paintings and inscriptions are clearly legible. The lines of the pictures are simple, and some are geometric in shape. The cultural monuments in the Indus Valley began to be excavated as early as the 1920s. Over the past 50 years, studies have confirmed that the scripts were written from right to left. In recent years, scholars from Finland and the Soviet Union have tried to use computers to decipher these texts, but have not made any progress.

In the Upper Indus Valley, Prof. Dani also discovered a large number of inscriptions carved on rocks in Kharoshti, Brahmi, Sogdian, Tibetan and Chinese. There are only a few Chinese inscriptions, usually consisting of 1 to 12 characters. The longest inscription has been translated into modern Chinese, which reads: "Gu Weilong, the envoy of Great Wei is travelling to Mimi" (大魏使谷魏龙今向迷密使去). Most of the other inscriptions consisting of one, two or three Chinese characters are interpreted as names of people or places. Since ancient times, the confluence of the Indus and Gilgit rivers has been regarded as an integral part of the magnificent transportation system of the "Silk Road". A large number of Hindu and Buddhist deities were unearthed here. The expedition team clarified the origin of Buddhist statues and initially understood how Buddhist statues developed to a new stage in China a few centuries later.

5,000 years have passed, how do the descendants of Mohenjo-Daro survive today? I climbed over the embankment of the Indus River, skirted a swamp, and saw two thatched huts by the river. There are two dilapidated wooden boats parked next to the thatched house. An old man who looks like

a grandfather is rowing the boat with his son and grandson catching fish on the river. Their clothing and daily necessities are very similar to those of primitive African tribes. When I was trying to talk to them, two armed soldiers came over. I was afraid of causing trouble to the three fishermen, so I had to walk away.

I interviewed Prof. Dani about what the Indus Valley Culture was. Prof. Dani taught in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) for 16 years before coming to West Pakistan in 1962. He said that as early as the 3rd century BC, Alexander the Great came from Central Asia and left many soldiers in the Indus Valley. The descendants of these soldiers are the white people of Aryan descent living in Pakistan and India today. Archaeologists have unearthed an important site from the Alexander era in South Pakistan. After Alexander the Great and the Greeks conquered Pakistan, they left an impact on art, medicine, drama, and language. Many of the Hellenistic languages, texts and arts also flowed into northwest China through Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Greeks were later defeated by the Kushan Empire. Muslims came to Pakistan after the 8th century AD.

Prof. Dani said that he had excavated many remains along the China-Pakistan Highway in the Karakorum Mountains, showing the route of Buddhism being introduced into China. "I don't know how many ancient Buddhist scripture manuscripts went to China from Pakistan. But anyway, we could not find them in Pakistan today. It is almost impossible to find any Buddhist manuscripts. Today, there are no Buddhists among Pakistanis in Pakistan except Buddhists in foreign embassies. However, it can be found in the culture, art and daily life of Pakistanis the legacy of Buddhism which was here 1,000 years ago."

Prof. Dani proudly said that this ancient Silk Road leading from Pakistan to Arabia and China is still vibrant and being used by people. Today, 70% of Pakistan's goods are smuggled to Arab countries through this route. In addition, Pakistani businessmen also smuggled Japanese electronic products and Korean clothing to Kashgar in Xinjiang, China, through the Khunjab Pass and the Karakorum Highway. Pakistani traders smuggled in silk and ceramics from China. "Whether the authorities are happy or not, people have to survive on this ancient trade route," he said.

On December 3, 1990, the "Peace Ark" sailed away from Port Qasim, Pakistan, in the cool sea breeze, heading towards the southern Arabian Sea. Dozens of scholars and government officials came to the dock which is 60 kilometers away from Karachi to see us off. Before leaving, Prof. Dani donated a complete set of historical and archaeological books published in Pakistan to the research ship. The ship sailed, and the 72-year-old Prof. stood on the dock and kept waving goodbye to us. The wind and sand rising from the ground ruffled old Dani's silver hair, but he still looked at us from a distance and refused to leave. During the week in Pakistan, Prof. Dani, as the

master teacher of Silk Roads studies, led our expedition team to travel up and down the Indus Valley for more than 3,000 kilometers under the scorching sun, conducting arduous research on ancient Indian civilization, Buddhist sites and early Islamic culture. Prof. Dani has been very friendly to me, a young Chinese scholar and a journalist. During my stay in Pakistan, he introduced me to the Governor of Sindh, the Minister of Culture and the Mayor of Karachi.

Excerpts from the diary of the Ashgabat-Almaty grassland route: On April 21, 1991, we arrived at the famous oasis city Merve in ancient Central Asia. The city was called Mulu (木鹿), as known in ancient documents from the Han Dynasty and Northern Dynasties of China (Ahmad Hasan Dani, n.d.). As the hub of the trade route between Roman territories and China, Du Huan (杜环) of the Tang Dynasty passed here on his way to the great food capital of Arkura (today's Iraq) in the mid-8th century and saw the Buddhist temple in Mulu City. This ancient city is recorded in cuneiform documents from the Near East, ancient Greek and Roman documents, and Arabic documents. Greek-style buildings, glass, pottery, seals, gems and Greek-style gods produced in the Roman Empire were unearthed in the ruins.



Dani & UNESCO expedition team arrives at Ashahabad via Moscow by a Soviet passenger plane photo by the author

In the 4th century BC, Merve was conquered by Alexander of the Macedonian Empire. During the Parthian Empire, Mulu was the largest city and the richest area at that time. By the Middle Ages, the Sasanian Empire adopted a tolerant attitude towards various religions. Zoroastrianism was the state religion, but Buddhism and Christianity coexisted with it. In another castle in the city, a large room for public activities of the Christian community

and Buddhist murals were excavated. Walking down the steps, there are colorful clay headless Buddha statues erected on both sides of the steps. During headsexcavation, archaeologists found a clay head. Near the clay Buddha head, a beautifully painted pottery jar was found depicting aristocratic life in the Sasanian Empire. A scroll of Buddhist manuscripts was found in the jar.

In the evening we walked into a swamp. This depression is surrounded by a city wall and in the center is a pagoda. When we walked into this ancient city located in a grassland desert, we were immediately surrounded by swarms of mosquitoes biting us. Prof. Dani said that this was an important stop for caravans on the Silk Road. In the 3rd and 4th centuries AD, there may have been a Buddhist community established here by merchants from India, Pakistan and China. At night, we camped in a nearby town.

At noon on April 28, 1991, we arrived at Urgench (Yulongjiechi Cheng 玉龙杰赤城, the capital of the Khwarezm Kingdom. This is the battlefield where the heroes in the best-selling Jin Yong (金庸) martial arts novels in China in recent years fought. In the Middle Ages, the Khwarezm region was not only the battlefield of military struggles and the center of agriculture and handicrafts, but also the center of East-West trade. The route from China to the Volga River, Eastern Europe and even the Baltic Sea must pass through the Khwarezm region. The people of Central Asia worshiped the sun, which is reflected in the place name Khwarezm. "Khware" means the sun and "Zem" means the land. This is the land of the sun. Records about the Khwarezm Kingdom first appeared in Chinese documents in Han Dynasty, namely in Aqian City (奥鞬城) where King of Kangju Kingdom lived in the first century AD. The Khwarezm state, which rose to become the political center of Central Asia after the 2nd century, monopolized almost all commercial activities with China at that time. In 1200, Genghis Khan sent troops from four directions to attack and diverted water from the Amu Darya River to flood the city and destroyed it. In 1391 the ruler of Samarkand, Amir Temur, completely destroyed the city. However, the destruction of this place by Genghis Khan and Temur did not make Khwarezm disappear. Many ancient caravan *Sarais* have survived during the prosperous period.

In the evening, we came to the tomb of Temur's wife. There are three tomb chambers in the mausoleum, with a symmetrical structure. The first chamber in the tomb is the guard room. There is a treasure house under the mausoleum. I turned on the lighter, climbed down the wooden steps, and saw 6 bones below. They were all warriors of Queen Temur. I took out two skulls and saw one of the warriors had an arrow in his head, and the arrowhead had not been removed from the skull. Another warrior's head was split in two. Seeing these two warriors who died tragically, the magnificent image of the Khwarezm Kingdom that dared to compete with Genghis Khan appeared before my eyes. Prof. Dani said.

"Today we have only seen the ruins on the ground of the Khwarezm Kingdom. You can imagine how amazing the treasures buried underground would be if they were unearthed. If you want to understand the basic appearance of Yulongjiechi Cheng, it will take at least 25 years to excavate here. Urgench (Yulongjiechi Cheng) was the crossroads from Iran and Iraq to China,"

Early in the morning after arriving in Bukhara on May 2, 1991, Prof. Dani took me to the street and asked me to accompany him in search of something. He searched for the caravan *Sarai* that his grandfather ran in the maze-like ancient city.

Chinese literature records that the Bukhara City was composed of 5 parts and was surrounded by city walls. The local people told us that there are 11 gates in Bukhara, facing various countries on the Silk Road. In Bukhara, there are three caravan *Sarais* built by Indians, three caravan *Sarais* built by Chinese businessmen, and two caravan *Sarais* built by Afghans and Arabs. Prof. Dani had since childhood often heard his grandmother telling stories about her journeys between Bukhara and Kashgar to do business. More than half a century had passed, and Prof. Dani found that ancient commercial street from his childhood memories. There are many shops, workshops, and bookstores lined up on both sides of the commercial street. Most of them are two or three-story buildings with wood and mud structures. Walking a few dozen meters forward, we saw a cross-street building spanning the roofs of the ground floors on both sides. We walked out from below, and a square appeared in front of us. On one side of the square, Prof. Dani discovered an Indian-style building that had long been in disrepair. Prof. Dani confirmed that this large-scale building was the caravan *Sarai* that his grandfather ran in his early years. But I asked him, why don't Indians, Chinese and Arabs share one big caravan *Sarai*? He was a little confused when he heard my question.

That night, in order to congratulate Prof. Dani's discovery, the mayor of Bukhara issued "Honorary Citizen Certificate of Bukhara" to Prof. Dani at the banquet welcoming the expedition team and announced that the city government will rebuild Prof. Dani's grandfather's caravan *Sarai* and this international commercial city will be revitalized (Ahmad Hassan Dani, n.d.).

Bukhara preserves many complete ruins of ancient castles, mosques and palaces. In a castle built in 1000 BC, relics brought here by various countries through the Silk Road are displayed. In the castle, I saw an 18th-century Chinese blue and white porcelain vase, which was more than one-meter high. It is hard to imagine that this item was transported here by camel from China, thousands of miles away. In an underground mosque museum, a tapestry hangs on the wall. The tapestry was produced in Xinjiang, China, in the 19th century. The design in the center of the rug is a Chinese Taoist Tai Chi Tu (太极图), with Zoroastrian design on the edges. Prof. Dani said that this carpet shows that Central Asia is a melting pot of various religions. The

tapestry shows the profound influence of China's Central Plains' culture in the Xinjiang Uyghur region.

Conclusion

UNESCO's three Silk Road routes expeditions led by Prof. Dani was the last successful attempt of the international community to restore the inter-civilization, inter-faith and cross-value dialogue. This is an attempt to reunite different civilizations and values of the East and the West on the Silk Road by exploring the history of cross-civilization communication and rediscovering the universal value of the Silk Road spirit which acknowledges the inclusiveness of different cultures and values, which transcends the antagonistic and even hostile perspective of Eastern and Western values during Cold War.

Before the end of the Cold War, "UNESCO Silk Roads, Roads of Dialogue program" helped to highlight the shared heritage of the peoples of the Eurasian continent. "The concept of 'the road' has since become a conceptual framework for thinking about cultural exchanges and interactions between peoples living on the Eurasian land. Dr. Doudou Diène, former director of UNESCO's Division of Intercultural Dialogue and coordinator of the program said recently, "The Silk Road was the most fertile approach to translating the concept of interculturality (UNESCO, 2023a). How can East and the West continue to foster inter-civilization and inter-faith dialogue in a world which has been clearly marked by wars and tensions between the East and West? "Based on good practices developed over the past three decades, we want to raise awareness about the shared heritage of these ancient trade routes. The aim is to demonstrate their potential for resolving conflicts and building inclusion and peace, " said Gabriela Ramos, Assistant Director-General for the Social and Human Sciences of UNESCO (UNESCO, 2023b), "There is a lack of trust in our world today, manifested by a fear of those who are different". "Through programs such as the Silk Roads, which foster intercultural dialogue and knowledge, we can combat this mistrust by emphasizing what unites us rather than what divides us. By identifying the issues that bring countries and communities together, including their shared history, and by underscoring how these interactions have brought joint developments, we contribute to building solid bridges for the future."

Prof. Dani devoted his life to researching and popularizing Trans-Eurasian civilizations across Hindu Kush and Karakorum. He hoped to restore long-lost social and cultural threads between the peoples of East, Central and South Asia, which requires not only the will of politicians, diplomats and entrepreneurs from various countries, but also popular writings by historians and archaeologists. Popular writing on archeology is writing for bookstores, rather than elite academic circle writing that is only read by small

professional circle. The so-called elitist writing style is the extensive use of jargon for targeted a tiny audience. Good popular writing is more like a newspaper article, a museum brochure, or a travel guidebook. Prof. Dani's narrative in his travelling speeches, interviews and writings are suitable for both refined and popular tastes. For insiders, they are professional academic monographs. For laymen, not only can they understand them, but they can also see the clues. Prof. Dani has published most of the academic monographs "History of Northern Areas of Pakistan", "The Historic City of Taxila", and "Human Records on Karakorum Highway", which are regarded as professional academic monographs among Chinese academic circles, but these works are easy-reading academic works. They are not only sold in bookstores, but also given to foreign friends by the Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Pakistan embassy in Beijing as gifts to promote Pakistan's historical and cultural heritage. Prof. Dani's speeches and interviews with the press when he led UNESCO team on the road also meant to persuade the international community to develop a common cultural and political understanding in the best interests of the world people.

As Prof. Dani said, "When we are digging in a corner of Pakistan, we are touching a chord of this human relationship. Its tune is bound to affect the historical movements of the world. On our part we are at the dig to discharge our responsibility – to lay bare the remnants of civilizations that humanity has left over the ravages of time. In this field of reconstruction and realization, we hope, we have the goodwill of all and cooperation of all those who believe in the common destiny of man (Dani, 1965-66).

Historians divide history into large and small units in order to give themselves and their students a clear understanding of its characteristics and changes. The construction of history by historians is a bit like news media writing by journalists. The construction of news simplifies history, culture and civilization, leaving more blank spaces and blank spots. Historical chronology and cultural divisions lead us to ignore the chronicles of different cultures that developed in parallel with our own, their parallel development trajectories, and our differences from theirs. The areas and the routes which Prof. Ahmad H. Dani led us walked into have provided us some of the richest, most valuable and often most ignored history (Khan & Shaheen, 2015).

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