

OBITUARY

SHAIKH KHURSHID HASAN

(4 April 1929 - 6 March 2022)

Shaikh Khurshid Hasan (4 April 1929---6 March 2022) died at the age of 94. Had he lived till the age of 194, he would still have been mourned because of his indelible services to Archaeology and History. Shaikh Khurshid Hasan held a Post-Graduate Diploma from Rome University. He served the Federal Department of Archaeology from 1952 to 1988, retiring as Director-General. Apart from his services to Pakistan, Shaikh Khurshid Hasan served as UNESCO Expert in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka (1985) The Government of Italy awarded him the title Knight of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic in 1993. Shaikh Khurshid Hasan was awarded the Quaid-i-Azam Gold medal by the Ideology of Pakistan Council on 27 March 2017.

Shaikh Khurshid Hasan's post retirement age was the most productive of his life. He began writing book after book and his book are not just texts, they involve ground plans, elevations and the roof styles in an intricate manner to make them authentic. Always from the ruins he encountered he enabled the reader to visualize the societies that had inhabited them. Shaikh Khurshid Hasan began with *Chaukandi Tombs in Pakistan*, Karachi, Royal Book Co., 1996. Chaukandi is the largest necropolis in Sindh which with its intricate stone work has brought archaeologist after archaeologist to revisit this site to marvel at the aesthetic aspects of funerary architecture.

Shaikh Khurshid Hasan's next title was an extension of his earlier work *The Islamic Architectural Heritage of Pakistan*, Karachi, Royal Book.Co.2002. While he covered funerary art across Pakistan. In his third book Shaikh Khurshid Hasan took up the theme of *Historical Forts in Pakistan*, Islamabad, National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research (NIHCR) 2005. In this work he traces the history of forts in general beginning with Jericho Fort 7000BC. In Pakistan he begins by describing Kot Diji circa 3500BC. Shaikh Khurshid Hasan measured the slant of the bastions at an angle of 8 ½ degrees.

From pre-historic to Greek forts, Shaikh Khurshid Hasan describes the Buddhist forts at Sirkap 200BC. The fortress at Mahotra though it has clear Gandhara features, points out that the site is yet to be fully explored. He then describes the excavation at Taki or Tse-Kia and then on to later monuments. Next, Shaikh Khurshid Hasan gave us *Pakistan Its Ancient Hindu temples and Structures*, Islamabad, NIHCR, 2008, adding to the tradition begun by Abu Rehan Al-Beruni After Hindu architecture Shaikh Khurshid Hasan devoted a book to Buddhist monuments *Religious Architecture of Gandhara, Pakistan, Buddhist Stupas and Monasteries*, Islamabad, NIHCR, 2013. Gandhara Art due to Indo-Greek fusion is native to Pakistan but revered by millions of Buddhists across the world.

When Shaikh Khurshid Hasan returned to Islamic themes, he still remained eclectic. *Muslim Architecture of Pakistan Aspects of Public Welfare*, Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2015, in this book he expounded upon well architecture, which necessarily involved hydraulic engineering. Apart from the technical side, he brought out how monuments for general welfare were constructed and maintained. The expository value of his work was heightened when Shaikh Khurshid Hasan published *Evolution and Development of Mosque Architecture in Sindh*, Islamabad, NIHCR, 2017. The theme of his last work was boldly chosen and ably executed, *Muslim Architecture in Pakistan aspects of Figural Representation*, Islamabad, NIHCR, 2019 which was reviewed in *Quarterly Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. LXVIII:2 , April to June, 2020

In this title there were many features uncommon in books on art and architecture, the most prominent being accounts of the folk tales that are represented in funerary illustrations. This book too, is great in expository and social value. We can go on outlining the prodigious contribution made by Shaikh Khurshid Hasan just by mentioning the titles of his books, but we have to spare a moment to recall that revered old gentleman who graced the Executive Committee of the Pakistan Historical Society from before the time I was inducted. His vision, his projection, his advice shall be very sorely missed by those of us who were fortunate enough to share the company of Shaikh Khurshid Hasan.

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