

Paṛsiāñā

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Such A Long Journey

5



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Cover: A scene from Such A Long Journey

Photo by Sharon Stephens

Change in publishing schedule

In order to comply with postal regulations whilst minimizing mailing costs, the *Parsiana* publishing schedule is to be modified. Instead of February-March and July-August being two-in-one issues, only June-July will be a composite publication. January and February will be separate issues whereas earlier there was no issue for the month of February. March will be a special Jamshedi Navroz issue, and August, the special Pateti issue.

The calendar that we published last year in December will now constitute the issue for that month. Readers will continue to receive the same number of issues as previously and the same quantum of editorial matter, if not more.

Parsiana is now on schedule thanks to your support. Your assistance has made it possible for us to upgrade our computer equipment. We thank our loyal subscribers and generous advertisers and donors for bearing with our delays all these years.

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Readers' views are welcome on any subject of interest to the community and should be sent to the Editor, Readers' Forum, Parsiana, G.P.O. Box 892, Bombay 400001. Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity. Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"The Greening of..."

It was highly encouraging to read what Dinshaw K. Tamboly wrote about our Bombay Doongerwadi ("The Greening of..." Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, June 1999). At the same time I am worried about what Pashmina Contractor writes ("More Parsi myths," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, September 1999). She is absolutely justified in defending our age old custom of dokhmenashini, but the fact cannot be ever denied that at times the areas near the Doongerwadi have the stench of putrefying bodies in the dokhmas, which until a few years ago was not the case. This is mainly due to the fact that the vulture population over the years has decreased and hence in certain seasons, especially in rainy and post rainy seasons, the uneaten bodies putrefy within the dokhmas, emanating a stench due to the high humidity in the atmosphere.

According to the *Vendidad*, the body

must be feasted upon by the man-eating animals and then the bones kept for Khurshed-Nagirashni. The dokhma is built specially to serve both these purposes and since in modern times it is not possible to let loose man-eaters in the dokhmas, the vultures are the best alternative. Due to developmental activities around these dokhmas the vulture population has certainly decreased. After a point there may not be any, defeating the very purpose of these dokhmas.

To increase the vulture population over there will be difficult even if more greenery is introduced. One solution I can put forward is to slowly shift to the more natural environs on the outskirts of Bombay, ensuring undisturbed vulture population over there. The state government should be asked to sanction such lands, preferably on hills or hillocks, and new dokhmas should be built there. An act should be passed preventing any sort of developmental activities within a radius of about 10 km around the dokhmas. As such dokhmas become operable, the old ones at Malabar Hill could be permanently shut down and after a prolonged period they may be completely destroyed and the land reclaimed for any further developmental activities, which can be gainful to the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP). Otherwise in the face of growing opposition from the growing population around Malabar Hill, the state government can cook up a sudden surprise for the BPP. I feel the BPP must take this matter very seriously and start looking for more suitable places where the age old custom of dokhmenashini can be better practised without any sort of encumbrances.

V. H. THANAWALLA
Pune

Responsible voters

All the Parsi anjumans/associations in existence at various places in India and abroad follow the adult franchise system which allows all their adult members to vote and select the trustees of their own choice. The Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) is one body which has its own scheme, devised and followed by them. The scheme is anti-Parsi, anti-democratic and such scheme is not in existence anywhere in India or abroad.

Normally to vote for a particular party or an individual you get some gift in cash

or kind, but in case you want to vote for a trustee of the BPP, you are required to pay a minimum sum of Rs 15,000.

It is simply sickening to read about the rights of donors. 'Donation,' means to give or contribute, in cash or in kind, voluntarily, to any individual or any institution. When the BPP accepts a sum of Rs 15,000 as donation, in exchange of a right to vote at trusteeship elections, the amount collected is not voluntary. As such it cannot be called 'donation' and it can only be called 'extortion.'

Time and again we are told that all our woes, worries and misfortunes in the government are due to the fact that the Indian Constitution has allowed adult franchise to be exercised by the illiterate masses. I have witnessed elections in Uttar Pradesh and other places and I can say confidently that the so-called illiterate masses are honest and mature voters and know what to do. But it is our misfortune that we have unscrupulous politicians who will go to any length to acquire power and retain the same. Do not blame the electorate, blame the dirty politicians.

In our community we have honest, mature and intelligent persons who can be trusted. The BPP should have no fear as we are responsible and know our duty. However, the community will not be responsible if the candidates are not of proper caliber.

Why are the trustees afraid of introducing adult franchise? The Punchayet should stop issuing baseless arguments and come out openly to discuss the problem. Be broad-minded and accept the inevitable.

DALI J. GUNDEVA

Minority quota

The Supreme Court has recently held that special provisions like reservation for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes or other backward classes are not permissible in terms of the national interest for admissions to super speciality courses in medicine and engineering, where merit alone should be the sole criterion for selection.

Reservation percentages above 50 percent as followed by some states put minority communities at a great disadvantage since only a minuscule percentage of seats is reserved for these communities. In spite of their obtaining

Reaching for the Sky



Two landmarks in Bombay – the Commerce Centre of the World Trade Centre Complex and the new Reserve Bank Building.

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very high percentages of marks, far in excess of the minimum qualifying marks prescribed for the general category, boys and girls of minority communities find it extremely difficult to get admission in medical and engineering colleges. Now that competitive merit alone will be the criteria for selection they will have a wider base for admission. Thus the decision of the Supreme Court will be really beneficial to minority communities including the Parsis.

Parsi boys and girls should therefore compete for admission in courses of medicine and engineering purely on merit by obtaining a high percentage of marks in these important fields of education. This should be done early before any legislative measures are taken to sanctify reservation percentages.

As regards the quota reserved for minority communities, educational institutions want proof at the time of admission from competing candidates that they are members of a minority community. They can cite a notification dated October 23, 1993 issued by the Government of India, Ministry of Welfare which reads: "In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (c) of section 2 of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992 (19 of 1992), the Central Government hereby notifies the following communities as 'the minority communities' for the purposes of the said Act, namely: Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis). Sd/- (P. K. Mohanty) Joint Secretary."

R. S. GAE
New Delhi

Crab, not crow eaters

Since the publication of the book *Crow Eaters* I have meant to explain the wrong interpretation of the slang "*kagra khaao* (crow eaters) often used by Bombay Kolis, for the Parsis. It is actually "*khekhra khaao*," which literally means crab eaters, which we Parsis were and are. We certainly do not eat crows.

In my school days in Bombay, besides calling Parsis "*kagra khaao*" a hand gesture would be made by putting one palm over the other and moving all 10 fingers, to imitate crabs running on sand. We the Parsis are crab eaters and not crow eaters! This can be clarified by any first "resident," any old Koli, of Bombay.

Dr PHIROZ DASTOOR
Ontario, Canada

Surfing Irani surnames

Parsiana readers may be interested to

learn of the following Irani surnames: Abtin, Afagh, Afkhan, Afrigani, Afsheri, Aliabadi, Ariyanfar, Aryana, Aspandary, Azadpur, Azrami; Babakhan, Bakhshay, Bakhtiyari, Bamas, Bastani, Bozorgi; Chemi, Choukuri; Dehmeri, Dindar; Elubudi, Estegomat; Falati, Faramazian, Ferzadi, Ferzandi, Forogi; Goodarzi, Gostaspi; Hushangi; Ighani; Javanmardi, Jubani; Kabir, Kashmiri, Kashnavi, Katkhodiyani, Kermani, Keyani, Khashidari, Khoshrovi, Khoveri, Koorus, Kuchobyogi; Malati, Mazda, Mazre-Kalamtari, Meher-E-Zend, Mehadian, Mubarak; Namdariyan, Nasrabadi, Noreyazdan, Nusian; Oshtori; Parestani, Parsaai, Partov, Peshtoni, Purbehrami; Rashidi, Shamerdan, Shaver, Sherazi, Shokre-Khodah; Tafti, Tausian, Tawakkuli, Teherani, Tejam; Yazdani, Yazdi; Zainabudi, Zandbof, Zaq, Zarthosty, Zartoshty-Manesh.

Z. M. ZEND

Faith and mountains

Ours is one of the oldest and purest religions of the world and it is our duty to keep it this way. Our community has always been economically and socially sound. But there are many problems that we face today. There is a lot of enmity amongst Zarthushstis. If such evil thoughts come into our minds, I am sure we will be one of the extinct species of the world very soon. After all, Lord Zoroaster formed this religion so that we may live together in peace and harmony without fighting.

If we have any problems regarding religious matters, we should always solve them through peaceful and right means. Recently, the Parsis of Dahanu met at an anjuman meeting to discuss the issue of mixed marriages and whether women who have married outside should be allowed in the fire-temple. People started screaming and shouting and no one knew what to do. Finally they didn't come to any conclusion. If we all fight on religious matters like that, then what is the meaning of religion? Are we gaining anything? I understand that this is an important issue but there are better means of solving such problems.

If we have to survive in the next millennium we should live together and help each other when we have problems. Unity is a must for this purpose.

We should always point out someone's mistake and show him the right path and we should never feel afraid to do so for "faith can move

mountains." True, but you have to face the mountains first. Faith without action is meaningless. As true Zarthushstis, it is our duty to keep our environment clean and tidy. To think good, to do good and to be good.

FARZAN MAZDA
Dahanu

Her mite to mitigate

Fifty-one years ago, a pious, genteel woman, Mani Siganporia, embarked upon doing her own personal mite to mitigate, to the extent possible, hardships of a few members of the community around her. By word of mouth she appealed to her near and dear ones to extend a helping hand. Being generally very kindhearted, more and more Parsis started coming forward to lend a helping hand to this philanthropic endeavor.

A good number of the community in Bombay as also in the rural areas of south Gujarat desperately needed help in one form or another. Although the task was daunting the efforts continued with even greater vigor and were ultimately institutionalized under the name of Zoroastrian Ladies Committee.

Twice every year, on Jamshedi Navroz and the Shahenshahi New Year, at the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, foodgrain packets and a few essential commodities worth Rs 400 each are given to over 2,000 needy families belonging to the community as also to the widows in the six widows' chawls in Bombay. These inmates of the widows' chawls and residents of Doongerwadi are also provided with blankets, towels, napkins, utensils, kusti, etc free of cost. Then, the inmates of the Parsi ward at the J. J. Hospital are provided with wholesome meals twice a week involving a monthly expenditure of Rs 8,500. Parsi patients at the free wards at the Parsee General Hospital as also the Masina Hospital are given financial assistance of over Rs 1,20,000 every year.

Poverty leads to educational, economic backwardness which in turn perpetuates poverty. In order to break this vicious circle, the Zoroastrian Ladies Committee has been supporting every year the education of 18 Parsi girls at the Bai Avabai Petit School and of five at the Home for Rural Parsi Zoroastrian Girls by providing for fees, uniforms, books, etc. Further, a few deserving students are also provided with college and hostel fees, etc. In addition, the Athornan Madressa at Dadar, Bombay,

continued on page 52

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Mauritius

Events and Personalities

Prime care and values

By providing bore wells and developing catchment areas to supply drinking water, by introducing crafts like card making, vermiculture and sewing to help generate income, by focussing on primary health care education and balwadis for the village children, by... The Gharda Foundation is endeavoring to pursue its "philosophy of development rather than charity and (striving) to make villagers self-reliant," as notes their handout.

Started in 1996 by Dr Keki H. Gharda, the founder and managing director of Gharda Chemicals Limited, The Gharda Foundation is a private, non profit, philanthropic organization dedicated to holistic rural development. "Our village development schemes focus on developing cooperative schemes with villagers to provide them with the basis for self-sufficiency and self-determination," notes their literature. They are presently concentrating their efforts on four villages in Maharashtra (Dhamni, Kadavli, Kumbhavali and Dalwatne) and two in Gujarat (Bharan and Boridra) where with the participation and involvement of the villagers they are pursuing their four-fold objectives: providing basic necessities of clean water, sanitary surroundings, health and schooling; improving agricultural output and productivity; securing a self-sustaining economy to halt urban migrations; empowering women and children to raise the family standard of living.

Among their key projects are the mobile library and mobile science laboratory where their van, specially fitted with metallic boxes accommodating books to interest students from Std I to Std VIII and science paraphernalia for Std VII to Std X tours different sites on



Top: Gharda (right) inaugurating the animal husbandry program

Below: New school at Bharan and women engaged in an income generation project

request, leaves behind one box with one school for a week and among their key projects are the mobile library and mobile science laboratory where their van, specially fitted with metallic boxes accommodating books to interest students from Std I to Std VIII and science paraphernalia for Std VII to Std X tours different sites on

ranges to pick it up the next week along with the feedback from the students. The mobile library which is their important contribution in the Khed taluka reaches out to approximately 30,000 children every week, states their pamphlet.

The 20-bed Gharda Hospital run by the Gharda Medical Foundation in the Lote area in Maharashtra provides rou-

tine and critical medical care and hopes to start a blood bank, if donors come forward. The Hospital also maintains a mobile dispensary which provides care to the sick of the surrounding villages and educates them on issues such as vaccination, family planning and prevention of communicable diseases.

Registered as a public charitable trust with their office at 5/6 Jer Mansion, W. P. Varde Marg, Bandra (W), Bombay 400050, the four trustees managing the Foundation are Dr Keki Gharda, Dr



Sonya Meh-ta, Dr M. Gokhale and U. A. Maroo. In addition to their four paid social workers they have a chain of social ani-

mators, consultants, village committee members facilitating the work of the Foundation, considerably assisted by the Gharda Chemicals' office staff at Ankleshwar and Lote, mentions a spokesperson from the Foundation.

Museum for memories

The Cairn, home for over 50 years to the late J. R. D. Tata and his wife Thelma, may be converted into a museum to keep alive memories for posterity, noted a write-up in *The Indian Express* of August 17, 1999. "Tata Sons is planning to...purchase (JRD's) residence on Altamount Road, valued at Rs 40 crore," according to the newspaper report.

Built in the middle of the 19th century, the Scottish style colonial bungalow is supposed to have a dining cum living room at the lower level with a small flight of steps leading to 10 bedrooms. One of the rooms in the bungalow



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was converted into a lathe workshop with special electrical connections where JRD "used to spend his free time," Ratan Lalkaka, chief executive of the Petit Trust was quoted in the paper. The property includes 1.3 acres of lush green land and a built-up area of over 60,000 square feet dotted with small beautiful cottages which serve as servants' quarters, it was detailed in the paper.

Since the property was rented to JRD by Sir Dinshaw Petit III, (Thelma's brother), it reverted to the Avabai Petit Residuary Estate Trust after the couple's demise. "Tata Sons has bid for the property but there are a number of permissions to be sought before acquiring it," reported a spokesperson of the group. The bungalow being classified as a heritage III structure by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, the rules stipulate that modifications be permitted only if the style of the structure is not altered, noted the news item.

Holistic education

"Committed to a balanced and holistic

education system," the proposed Education Renewal Foundation is seeking to establish a Rudolph Steiner school in Bombay by next June, funds permitting, announced the Foundation's representative, Aban Bana at a press conference. Also known as the Waldorf system of education, this revolutionary method of imparting knowledge at the curriculum level was founded by the eminent Austrian philosopher, educationist and litterateur Dr Rudolph Steiner who died in 1925, notes a press release forwarded by Sarosh Bana giving the highlights of the press conference.

Following the establishment of the first Steiner school in Stuttgart in 1919 after the end of World War I, more than 700 others were started, reported Patricia Hague, a kindergarten specialist and eurythmist with 25 years of teaching experience in England who had come to Bombay to conduct a month long education orientation course in July-August 1999. The course aimed at teachers, parents and students included the

**RUDOLF STEINER EDUCATION WORKSHOP
FOR KINDERGARTEN
TEACHERS AND CHILDREN
FROM JULY 27 TO AUGUST 27, 1999.
CONTACTED BY: PAT HAGUE (U.K.)**



(From left) Hague, Aban Bana and Brilliant: advocating new learning

theory and practice of Waldorf education providing an insight into eurythmy for children, circle games, artistic activities, discipline, coordinated functions, toy making, working with puppets and storytelling.

Earlier in May, Aban Bana who has trained in Waldorf pedagogy in Switzerland, conducted a three-week residential teachers' training course at Khandala's Dhunmai Cawasji High School. "Though Waldorf education dispenses with examinations and textbooks, there is a well-defined evaluatory procedure helped also by the fact that

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the same class teacher remains with the pupils from class one to eight," explained Aban Bana. "Students are encouraged to research on their own for the respective subjects through diverse reference sources and hence will not be subjected to textbook cramming in any examination-oriented environment." After the eighth standard, the students will be geared for transition to the ICSE (Indian Certificate of Secondary Education) system.

While Waldorf schools in the West levy fees that are 12 percent of the disposable income of the parents, the fee structure in India had yet to be determined, announced Patrick Brilliant, one of the parents keen to enrol his children in the proposed school. "It is time to institutionalize alternative systems that are geared towards developing all faculties of the growing child and interest him, and his parents and teachers alike in his educational progress," declared noted author and lecturer Dr Leo Rebello.

The legendary lensman

"He was the enfant terrible of the ad world. An eccentric genius who broke all the known rules and produced divine

pictures," noted a tribute by columnist Shobha Dé to the legendary lensman Jehangir Gazdar who died on June 10, 1999 and was cremated at Bombay's Chandanwadi crematorium in the presence of those who had known and loved him. "Everything about him was outrageous — starting with his rates. Models quivered and quaked in their stilettos when they were booked to work with the demon-photographer. And yet, everybody fell over backwards for the chance — agencies, art directors, visualizers and of course the models themselves. He was tolerated, accepted, even venerated, for one reason alone (the only one that counts): Jangoo was quite simply the best," continued Dé in the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of June 16, reminiscing of the 1970 Bombay Dyeing advertising campaign when she had served as his model.

The year 1970 had also won recognition for Gazdar when he created the Air-India calendar. As recalled his close friend Adrian Stevens in *The Advertis-*



Gazdar (left) with an eye for detail

ing Brief, July 1, 1999, "Actually Jangoo came up with the concept of showing different parts of a woman's body, draped in saris, for Finlay Mills. But the company changed hands and the new owners didn't quite accept Jangoo's concept. 'We don't want to bring out a *Playboy* calendar,' was their refrain. So Jangoo approached Air-India with the

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idea. And though J. R. D. Tata personally didn't like the concept, the publicity department of Air-India was sold on the idea and pushed it through. The calendar was an instant success... in fact so much was the demand for the calendar that Air-India had to reprint 20,000 of them. Jangoo used several models for the calendar like the late Farida Pedder's (a dancer and choreographer of her time) hands and (actress) Zeenat Aman's feet..."

His coverage of the 1971 Bangladesh war earned him recognition as a photo-journalist, mentioned Stevens. He was also commissioned to do several notable features for reputed publications like *Life* and *Time* magazines. "His work was greatly appreciated both in India and abroad for its sensitive treatment of Indian subjects and several articles were published on it in the *Smithsonian Journal* and professional photography magazines," stated a write-up in *The Times of India* of June 16, 1999.

Born in 1933 Gazdar went to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston in the 1950s to study engineering. But he left midway to pursue photography. "With more money than he knew what to do with, he decided to follow his own path. And he did that brilliantly. Photography was not merely a vocation, it was his passion. And he excelled at it as only a fastidious perfectionist can. It was Jangoo who redefined parameters of both advertising and editorial photography," acknowledged Dé referring to him as "erudite, cerebral, well-read and intellectually arrogant (who) with his innate refinement, his sense of integrity and his finely-honed sensibilities (kept) pushing the goalposts further...till he decided he was bored with cameras and fell madly in love with computers."

Soul-searching journey

"Her canvas varies from the blossoming of the kundalini shakti, Lord Buddha attaining Nirvana to the expressions of... Lord Ganesha," wrote Ananya Banerjee in *The Free Press Journal* when commenting on Dr Kamal (Rustomjee) Malesra's paintings titled "Expressions" exhibited for the first time in Bombay at the Nehru Centre Circular Art Gallery



Malesra: self-taught artist

from May 11 to 17, 1999.

Describing the effort in the nearly 25 exhibits as "a revelation of an inward soul-searching journey," Banerjee marvelled at Malesra's usage of "soothing color, its brilliance and stupendous impact...Her compositions are lyrical, most showing yoginis in different meditative forms."

Twelve of her paintings were selected for exhibition at the Russian Embassy Cultural Centre at Bombay for two weeks beginning June 21, 1999 and from there they were expected to be taken to the UK (courtesy Russian Embassy), according to a press release. Prior to bringing her oil on canvas paintings to Bombay, Malesra had held a preview at the Oberoi Grand, Calcutta in early February after which the works were on view at Calcutta's Domus Art Gallery.

The proceeds of her show in Bombay were to be donated to charitable organizations like the Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratisthan and Ashadhan, mentioned the *Free Press* article. A homeopath by profession, Malesra is a self-taught artist. "To have taken up painting, no matter at what age or point in one's life, is to have entered into a new

and deeper awareness of the whole meaning of existence, to have tasted spiritual refreshment, and to have found the perfect form of creative relaxation," was the comment by Mervyn Levy which can sum up Malesra's foray into art.

Presence and absence

"If you have to die do it on a holiday, I can't miss school to attend your funeral." Porochist Savak Patel, better known as Prochi or Pretty, would thus jokingly remark to her family and associates to make sure that she did not have to take a single day's leave during her 40-year career as a teacher in Jamshedpur. In fact, her feat of not absenting herself from work earned her a mention in the *Limca Book of Records* in 1992.

The timing of her own death on Christmas eve, December 24, 1998 brought to mind fond memories of her disciplined life which were shared in *Manashni*, the quarterly newsletter of the Jamshedpur Parsee Association, in their first anniversary issue of April 1999 which was dedicated to the senior members of the community. "Ask any citizen of Jamshedpur and he is sure to have seen Pretty Patel in her long sleeveless frock cycling down the roads of the city. When she died...it brought to an end an era of dedication, care and the celebration of the spirit of life," wrote Adi Chehna in his editorial. She had also earned a reputation for never being late to School, even in heavy downpours when she would cycle with an umbrella. There were occasions when her cycle broke down or she met with an accident, but that too did not prevent her from reaching school on time.

"Her precious possession and constant companion was her cycle," recalled an old family friend Homi Vazifdar. Even after her retirement at the age of 63, she would ride 15-20 km on her bicycle every day, it was reported in "The tireless teacher," (*Parsiana*, February 1992). In the '40s, she had won the WW II RAF cycle race at the Keenan Stadium, it was mentioned in *Manashni*. According to her brother Soli, she was the first woman in Bihar to ride a seven horsepower motorcycle at the age of 17 and was the first woman to participate in vintage car rallies organized by *The Statesman* in Calcutta.



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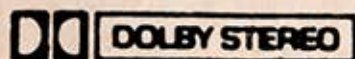
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Patel was also known for her valiant defence of those who were unjustly attacked and for involving herself in all the activities of Loyola School as she worked under 11 principals, two of whom were her ex-students. One of her colleagues Zarine Mody noted, "She always spoke her mind and never hesitated to call a spade a spade...Prochi was one of those few gifted and talented teachers...she prepared her classes in such a way each day that the parents would not have to worry about teaching their children when they went back home."



Patel: lived
by her values

Saturdays were reserved for social work through the Rotary Club. She also took the initiative for collecting funds for the Khan Sahib Rustomji Pestanji Patel Cheshire Home at Karandi and for the Sisters of Mercy working with the lepers in Sakchi, notes her brother.

A gifted artist, she enjoyed drawing and painting, making greeting cards, and doing make-up for the students at the School shows. Patel used her vacations to travel to historical places across the length and breadth of India, spending the barest minimum and carrying her own luggage, her brother recalls.

As commented one of her ex-students Mediomah Patel, "She was always 'Ms Patel,' a teacher who instilled a sense of discipline in us, and when we were ushered in her presence, her aura of authority dispersed whatever little doubts any one harbored. A glance from her would quell a mutiny, and when she said 'pin drop silence'... no one had the courage to drop a pin and find out."

Doyens of Dignity

A spate of assaults on elderly people living alone in Bombay in the recent past has contributed to many senior citizens feeling vulnerable about their life and property. To reassure them that there is help at hand, the Dignity Foundation launched their 'Security with Dignity' service on August 19, 1999.

Seventeen localities identified by the Bombay police as witnessing frequent crimes against the elderly have been identified: Colaba, Cuffe Parade, Gamdevi, Malabar Hill, Shivaji Park, Dadar, Matunga, Mahim, Chembur, Bandra, Khar, Santa Cruz, Juhu, Vile

Parle, Andheri, Borivli and Oshivara. The Foundation has appointed the first group of 170 Dignity wardens (10 per police station) "to address the needs of senior citizens in these areas," the president of the Foundation Dr Sheilu Sreenivasan was quoted in *The Times of India* of August 17.

The Dignity wardens are expected to make friendly visits to these elders, call them periodically, provide assistance as required on security measures. The Foundation is preparing a data base of elders residing alone and invites them to register with the Foundation through a specially installed Security Helpline (3841845), noted Sreenivasan.

Realizing that such information could be "dangerous" if it lands in the hands of unprincipled individuals the Foundation is trying to build some safeguards into the system, mentions Noshir Antia who has been appointed regional warden for the south zone which covers 19 police stations. In addition to him, there are other Zoroastrians who have volunteered to be wardens too.

They also hope to involve young volunteers in this scheme who can help run errands for these senior citizens and if nothing else, "just a smile and modest greeting from a young volunteer can work wonders in the lives of these elders who stay alone."

Some of the "do(s) and don't(s)" in the interest of the elderly were carried in the *Bombay Times* of August 19: Do not speak of money matters in front of the servants; do not access or lock away your money or jewelry in their presence; do not let electricians, plumbers do any work in the house unless there is a second known person in the house; instal a burglar alarm and an intercom system with a camera in the building; maintain records and photographs of the servants and watchmen. One of the security systems which recently came to their notice was reasonably priced at Rs 8,500 and permitted the resident to view the face and movements of the caller standing at the entrance to the building from the confines of his flat. Such gadgets may be affordable to elderly Parsis who are often abused by the family and servants, points out Antia. "By far the best protection is to let people staying around you know that you are alone and ask them to keep an eye on you," is their advice.

Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi



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absence of Irani Zarathushtis and young adults from the EB is astonishing and unacceptable," notes McIntyre.

Khorshed Jungalwala had been appointed co-chair of the program committee by FEZANA. McIntyre notes that Davier appointed Rustomji and Kaemerz Dotiwala as its two vice chairs. The original program committee comprised Bagli, Bhujwala, Davar, Pallan Ichaporia and Shahriar Shahriari, the lone young Iranian on the team. By November 1998 Jungalwala and her committee had actively collected ideas from around the world as to the topics Zarathushtis would like to see discussed at the Congress, writes

McIntyre. There were plans to request national and international museums to loan artifacts and cultural displays of Zarathushti heritage for display at Texan museums and Jungalwala had contacted Pakistan's ambassador to the UN Jamsheed Marker and star conductor Zubin Mehta "to explore their participation in the Congress."

Despite this early headstart, "in November 1998, the EB fired the entire program committee, and its FEZANA appointed chair Khorshed Jungalwala," writes McIntyre. "The meeting of the EB at which this occurred was held in secret and the recording secretaries were not permitted to be present. Therefore, it is not known who was instrumental in persuading the EB to take this action or why. We are sure that the EB was motivated by good intentions in permitting themselves to be persuaded, but in firing the FEZANA appointed co-chair, 'disbanding' the program committee, and taking over its functions, the EB, in my opinion, exceeded the authority granted to it by FEZANA in the Guidelines."

All of the EB's actions have been examined by McIntyre in the light of the Operating Guidelines for the WZC

2000 drafted by Vancouver's Bella Tata and adopted by FEZANA in June 1997. "The Guidelines give the EB authority to take disciplinary action including the right to deny a person committee membership, but require that in all such cases, the person 'get a fair hearing after due process.' ... There isn't a scintilla of evidence that the wholesale firing of all members of the program committee and its chair was the result of any disciplinary action against these persons, much less that they were given any kind of a hearing or due process, let alone a reason why they were fired." Some of them (the exception being Shahriari) were requested to accept the position of advisor or track leader under the direction of Manekshaw and Mistree which they found unacceptable. Writes McIntyre, "There are those who see the actions of the EB as part of a power grab. I do not care to speculate on such motives. It is interesting, however, that before the events complained of, the program development was in the hands of leading and respected North American Zarathushtis of various ideologies, whereas now the program is primarily in the hands of two people, Sarosh and Farrokh, and the rumors from India are that Khojeste Mistree is calling the shots for the new program. It is also interesting that one of the 'legacy projects' identified in the Program Guide is a book to be written by Farrokh Mistree which is 'underway.'"

A revamped proforma for the organizing of the Congress was suggested by McIntyre. Despite the endorsement of five FEZANA member organizations — the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas (ZANT), the Iranian Zoroastrian Association (IZA), the Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston Area (ZAGBA), the Zoroastrian Association of Kansas (ZAK) and the Zoroastrian Society of Washington State (ZSWS)

— the McIntyre letter was not included on the agenda of the FEZANA AGM on June 19, 1999.

At the AGM, ZAH representative Roshan Sethna said, "Trust us. We will give you a great program." ZAH asked FEZANA to ratify the actions of the EB and its program, receiving 22 yes votes and 21 abstentions (some of the associations have more than one vote, depending on the size of their membership), notes McIntyre in a letter dated July 24, 1999 addressed to Iran's Dr Mahyar Ardeshiri, requesting him to postpone any decision to boycott the Congress. McIntyre further writes, "If within the next few months, they present to the community a proposed program which is good and balanced, I will publicly support the Congress (with whatever little influence I have). But I will not play politics. Nor will I be window-dressing. If the proposed program is not well-balanced, I will boycott this Congress, and so (I have been informed) will many others. I do not know if our absence will make any difference. But that does not matter. Sometimes, in this muddled old world, one has to make a stand for what is right, regardless."

The official ZAH response to McIntyre dated August 7, 1999 signed by chairman Yasmin Pavri and members of the committee notes, "We would like (to) state publicly, once again, that we support the current structure of the EB as well as the steering committees. It ensures equal participation from FEZANA, the organizers of the Congress, and from the ZAH, chosen by FEZANA to host the Congress. It should also be noted that although many members of the ZAH are very actively involved in the work of the Congress, the day-to-day planning of the Congress is done by the EB and by the various steering committees, rather than by the ZAH working committee."

"You have spoken eloquently on the need to involve the youth. Making this Congress attractive to the youth has always been a priority of the EB and the steering committees. The Seventh Zarathushti Games will be held two days before the official opening of the Congress. The WZC 2000 sports committee, under the able and very enthusiastic chairmanship of Rustom Khosravian, has been in touch with the group who organized the Zarathushti Games in California. Some of the sports commit-



Clockwise from top left: Dastoor, Davier, K. Mistree and McIntyre



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tee members from Houston attended these games and have established a rapport with the organizers of the California games who will be assisting us to host the Seventh Zarathushti Games in Houston. These games were made part of the WZC 2000, in large part to encourage more participation by our youth. As you know, ZYNA (Zoroastrian Youth of North America) is currently busy organizing the Youth Congress in Montreal and has not had time to get actively involved with the planning of the WZC 2000. The Zoroastrian Youth Group of Houston (ZYGH) will be making a presentation at the Montreal Congress to ask for volunteers to develop sessions that are relevant to the youth. Members of the ZYGH have already had several Congress meetings. The current program structure has a track specifically for youth issues. This allows for a session on youth issues on each day of the Congress. The Congress will open with a jashan performed by our adult mobeds, and end with one performed by the younger mobeds, in a symbolic passing of the torch to the next generation. As you can see, not only does the Congress begin and end with the focus on the next generation, it makes the youth an integral part of the proceedings.

"Your closing paragraph gives us great concern. You state that if the program is 'good and balanced,' you will support it, otherwise you will boycott the Congress. We heard both co-chairs invite everyone to be a part of the Congress at our joint meeting in Houston. They have stated this again publicly at the FEZANA AGM. We believe that they are making every effort to include anyone who wishes to participate. In spite of these efforts, there are a few people who, for reasons of their own, have chosen not to participate. We do not believe that this should be construed as a failure of the EB to have a 'balanced program.'

"We urge you to set a good example of the cooperation that you so desire by being a bridge between those who feel alienated and those who are working hard to make the Congress a success, and by volunteering to speak on a topic that interests you."

In an e-mail missive to the ZAH working committee Farrokh Mistree notes explicitly, "I do wish to make it

clear that my resignation was for personal reasons (which I explained at the FEZANA AGM) and not in response to the false and malicious allegations that (Dina McIntyre) made about my brother Khojeste and me in her letter dated May 6, 1999."

Wrote Mitra Valatabar, president of ZANT to Pavri, "With five associations supporting the Congress I don't know why Framroze Patel did not see fit to put



From left: Bhote, Jungalwala and F. Mistree

Dina's resolution on the agenda and if they say they resolved it why not say something about it at the AGM, why keep it from everyone and tell everyone that only Dallas has supported it, I really don't get it. So please understand that we are all in support of (the) Congress but let's stop fighting and look into the issues and also find out why 21 associations chose not to vote in favor of ZAH's request. You should look and see why people are not participating because after all isn't this Congress for all and if some are not happy the word of mouth is strong and will not bring in the participation that you want. Our numbers are small, we are not a very big community and a very dominating religion, and if we don't try to see where the problem is we will lose people all the time."

Responded Farrokh Mistree, "At the FEZANA AGM a majority of the association votes were in favor of the resolution proposed by ZAH. The rest were abstentions. Allow me to point out that you too abstained in the voting. The reasons for association representatives casting an 'abstention' could be many, for example, being unfamiliar with the issue at hand, not having the OK from their local boards to vote on the ZAH resolution, wanting to remain neutral, wanting to give the WZC 2000 executive the opportunity to deliver the goods, etc. But what does the issue of abstentions have to do with the future? Let me

explain.

"The WZC 2000 executive and Congress team has made a lot of effort to get everyone on board. Many volunteers have come on board. There are those who have chosen not to; all for valid reasons no doubt. For those who have chosen to stay away I suggest that the Congress train has left the station with a host of people on board. Why not provide an opportunity to folk already on board this train — those who have already volunteered to make their contribution to this Congress?... To those who are still standing at the station I say — the Congress train will be stopping at other stations at which you will have the opportunity to board..."

Protesting against the allegation in McIntyre's letter, Khojeste Mistree had written to Patel on June 10, 1999: "I was invited by the Congress co-chairs to identify the 'names and addresses of talented people in the field of arts, science, literature, business, sports and music...' as early as April 10, 1998."

"Thereafter, I was invited to be on the program development committee by both yourself as well as the board of the WZC 2000 as per the e-mail dated December 2, 1998. I did not, at any point, solicit an invitation to be a member of the program committee nor have I sought to take any actions that in any way would impose or affect the workings of the World Congress. Subsequently, as per an e-mail dated March 10, 1999, I was asked by the WZC 2000 co-chairs to be the chairperson for the 'International Program Advisory' in order to provide support for all the task forces. Again this designation was not solicited by me.

"In my e-mail dated January 19, 1999, I have expressed unequivocally the following, 'I would like to see the program evolving upon the above broad-based lines wherein controversies are kept at bay and what we enjoy and agree upon should be the themes we should focus on, letting a mosaic or diversity emerge within an underlying core of religious unity. I also strongly feel that for this spirit to remain germane we should build a program around speakers, not on a political basis..."

"With this overall sentiment in mind, I suggested (as I was asked to) to give a



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list of speakers who would bring learning, and knowledge to the Congress. For the 'history component' I suggested some 17 themes for which at least 11 speakers were non-Zoroastrian, internationally recognized scholars, and therefore would have no axe to grind nor would they want to promote a political agenda for themselves...

"In my letter to you, I also suggested that another special track be organized, if the need was felt, in which lay people could be given the opportunity to expound their understanding of the doctrine '...giving a religious plurality and variety to the participants.' Does 'religious plurality' not offer a spectrum of diverse views? Furthermore, for this track, I did not suggest the names of any speakers, lest a finger be pointed at me...

"Might I ask you most humbly, why you as the president of FEZANA, have not already written a strong rejoinder to Keki Bhote and Dina McIntyre, whose missive dated May 6, 1999 has raised a controversy not only in North America but now in India, as well...

"Moreover, is it likely that sitting thousands of miles away, and without attending a single WZC 2000 meeting, I can orchestrate a 'speaker take-over' as implied?... I am indeed flattered by the powers that McIntyre ascribes to me. However, is this the true ground reality? You as the president of FEZANA are, in my humble opinion, obliged and obligated to dispel this lie in the interests of upholding the truth...

"I seek your unequivocal support against these unfounded allegations made about me, my wife and secretary in Ms Dina McIntyre's biased missive circulated it would seem to create disharmony and strife within the community..."

In their "Open letter to Zarathushtis of North America" Dastoor and Davier note: "Since April 1999, there had been buzzing sounds in different parts of North America of irregularities and highhanded way of operations by the WZC 2000 EB in that the Board unilaterally fired the 'program committee.' This buzz grew into a crescendo and so many variations of the same theme kept growing that in the end it became very hard for people to know what was reality and what was speculative interpretation. Letters were written, accusations made on unverified rumors. The situation became tense. The executive of the Congress issued a factual chronology

of events to each association and which is also available from the secretariat of the Congress. The matter was discussed at the FEZANA AGM on June 19, 1999. The officers of FEZANA and its member associations found the WZC 2000 executive to have operated within the Guidelines developed for the Congress. A vote of confidence was passed by the member associations, and the executive was charged to carry on its work.

"As co-chairs we want to close this unfortunate chapter and extend our hand of invitation to all Zarathushtis worldwide to join the WZC 2000 team in producing an all-inclusive Congress which will cut across different ideologies. We want this Congress to bring people from all parts of the world together for five fun filled days, and immerse them in a total Zarathushti atmosphere spanning millennia. While so doing we also want to spend time planning for our future, and developing strategies which will stand the test of time in the 21st century.

"The 'future' belongs to all of us; together we will win or lose the legacy which each of us is striving so hard to preserve for our children and our children's children. We wish to pass to the next generation a well lit torch and not a dying ember. To create a spirit of globalization, this Congress will have a few firsts: The addition of distinguished Zarathushti international liaison officials like Dr Mahyar Ardeshtiri from Iran, Homai N. Modi from India and Toxy Cowasjee from Pakistan, an international sports festival, a global scholastic competition, international community awards to recognize our own, unity quilt, international chamber of commerce, time capsule, a film festival, cultural exhibits, opportunity for 30 youth to visit North America from India, Iran and Pakistan with all expenses paid and, if we really work hard, one united world body for our community. It is only with the strength of the North American community behind us, with their moral and financial support can the 7WZC — the Zarathushti Odyssey 2000, mark the coming of age of the Second Zarathushti Diaspora and be an event for all of us to remember and cherish for a long time to come."

Though Houston's Rustomji has strenuously objected to the first part of the letter and McIntyre agrees that the first two paragraphs are "inaccurate,"

she also notes, "...the bottom line is: we all want a successful Congress... On the positive side, ZAH has pledged that there will be no censorship, and that all meetings of the EB will be open... FEZANA members voted in favor of ZAH's request with 22 yes votes and 21 abstentions. That clearly indicates that many members were not happy with the situation. And that also reflects the feelings of many people in the community at large...

"I think we all have to swallow our pride and ego... and cool the rhetoric, so as to give ZAH a chance to deliver on its promise to give us a great program. This they will not be able to do if we keep fighting with each other...

"We have heard some very beautiful words about good intentions for an inclusive program. Now we must give them a chance to produce actions to match those words."

In a message of new year greetings dated August 7, 1999 Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee and World Zoroastrian Organisation, London vice president Dinshaw Tamboly asked, "What is the future that we are going to leave our youth? A well lit brightly burning flame, or dying embers?" and followed it up the next day with a message to Dastoor and Davier: "I wish to express my solidarity with the organizers of the Congress." Firdosh Mehta of Alberta concurred: "Before one can practice the love for power, one must understand the power of love." Added inspirational speaker Meher Amalsad of California, "There is unity in community."

The well-meaning balm could help the wounds to heal. Responded Davier to Tamboly on August 11, 1999: "You have used the word solidarity and it has sparked off a flame which had somehow withered down over the past five years...Solidarity is a very strong sentiment which comes alive from togetherness" as he recalled the silent solidarity of the Latvians that broke the Soviet yoke as he had witnessed in 1990. "My fellow Zarathushtis we have as yet not found what the Latvians and Polish had discovered... that solidarity exists and it works, we mere mortals need to gather in communal togetherness to find the satisfaction, love and peace which comes as part of the complete package... Come, let's discover our solidarity!"

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

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Documenting a lifestyle

Dr Shernaz Cama is spearheading a UNESCO project to document Zoroastrian life in India

Arnavaz S. Mama

"How is it that such a small community of less than 1,00,000 at its peak period on the subcontinent has been able to make such a large contribution? How have they excelled in its every corner while keeping their own identity intact? What does their religion, seen to be abstruse and exclusive, teach its followers so that Parsis are best known for their honesty and hard work?"

The UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)-supported project proposal for preserving the Parsi Zoroastrian culture and heritage seeks to address some of these questions, as notes its author Dr Shernaz Cama (née Sethna). Other institutional supporters include the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) and the Delhi Parsi Anjuman.

The accent of the project is on recording living oral traditions, preserving documentary archival material and heritage sites, and capturing Parsi arts and crafts on a multimedia format. It also aims to document Parsi contributions to banking, trade, industry, dairy farming, aviation, medicine, social sciences, atomic research, theater, music, the arts, etc. "Making people aware of the success of the Parsis in India is the key to generating interest in their ways, not only for social scientists but also for the layman," writes Cama.

Planning to reprint old books and microfilm old manuscripts and rare documents and making these available also on a multimedia format would enable easy access to them from anywhere in the world. "Ultimately we aim to create an International Museum of the Parsis under the aegis of UNESCO which would also include a living culture component. This along with a National Archive on the Parsi Zoroastrians both in written and other media forms would provide a complete record of the

community," states the project report.

Cama sees the present communal plight of "a falling birthrate and an aging population, migration and fear of being overwhelmed by events" as a direct result of the anglicization and urbanization that has cost the community the twin loss of the Gujarati language — on which were based their living traditions and subconscious psyche — and the joint family where elders preserved the oral traditions. To ascertain the community's thinking on the subject she has formulated a survey of oral traditions (see page 27) responses to which will be codified to produce sociological data on current community attitudes.

The project will dissect the community's achievements under 10 heads beginning with oral traditions — subdivided into the living heritage, and religion and the priesthood. The first examines the customs and traditions of daily life e.g. the kusti prayers; records the monajats which were Gujarati renditions of the prayers sung individually and in chorus by family and friends as a "bonding" process; examines the culture of Parsi Gujarati; collates legends, rituals, stories, superstitions and folktales, rendering a sensitive translation; highlights the ecological concerns and concepts of hygiene like reverence for nature and all the elements, viz the conservation of water, the importance of the dog, etc; reviews the ritual and physical purity rules, concepts of death and disease, the ceremonies; reminisces on the lifestyles past; examines the position of women and their influence.

Under religion and the priesthood will be included most ceremonies and prayers including the higher liturgies which may die out with the aging priesthood as "most of the prayers are part of an oral tradition," notes the report. Other divi-

sions under this head are the magi, the *Gathas*, *nyaishes*, *nirangs*, *vendidad*, *baj*, *jashan*, the sacred bull, the role of mankind, the importance of choice, *navar* training, the declining priesthood, etc.

The second major goal is the "ultimate aim of involving UNESCO in an Udvada Action Plan ... to try and declare the little town of Udvada a World Heritage Site and preserve, along with the most sacred Atash Behram in India, the typical architecture and lifestyle of the areas around it." Other sites envisaged under this head include the Bahrot Caves, the *dokhmas*, the *Bhikha Behram Well*, the *Goti Adaran* in Surat, *Jamshetji Tata's birthplace* in Navsari, the various cemeteries, etc in India plus the *Pirs*, *Persepolis*, *Nasq-i-Rustom* in Iran and other unidentified sites in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Western China where Zoroastrianism had flourished in the days of empire.

The preservation of archival materials include Avesta, Pahlavi and Gujarati manuscripts, the *Rivayats*, *Kisseh-i-Sanjan*, the *Shah Nameh*, collection in the Meherjirana Library of Navsari and the Royal Asiatic Library of Bombay as well as in Manchester, the British Library and various American collections. The swords in the atash behrams, spears in the agiaries and maces in various *dadgah* are also considered archival material.

Parsis in politics, in professional life, in industry, trade and science are sought to be featured in the next three modules. Under music, theater, films and dance would be included adaptations from Shakespeare as well as the Gujarati and English theater traditions and the Parsi comedy of *Adi Marzban*. Classical and modern Indian cinema music, composers, singers, bands and dancers are sought to be covered. Arts and crafts include kusti and *sudreh* making, *chalk*, *toran*, *sapat* making, embroidery and textile weaving, *pheta* and *pugree* making, furniture, jewelry, watchmaking and bonesetting as also painting and



Cama: spreading awareness about the community

sculpture.

The history of institutions for education, research and law, orphanages and hospitals would be documented in a separate module. The medical paradoxes that are a part of the Parsi community — longevity, cancer and Alzheimer's disease, G6PD deficiency, allergies, low fertility, osteoporosis, eye problems like macular degeneration, weakness of the optic nerve, retinal problems will be analyzed and researched as a separate module.

UNESCO has provided the initial seed money of US \$ 4,500 (over Rs 1,80,000) and now "expect us to raise extra budgetary resources from various trusts, institutions and individuals to meet the cost of the project," wrote the late C. L. Sharma as UNESCO's special ambassador to India and Asia and deputy director general emeritus in a letter to *Parsiana*. The 10 modules of the project estimate a total outlay of Rs 89.44 lakhs in the first two years. The estimates include the production of the first grid of the CD-Rom, the first book as well as office expenses and rent, travel and lodging for seven persons involved in the research and shoot missions in Gujarat; the cost of professional per-

sonnel including a chief investigator, field workers for collection of data, questionnaires, etc and sociologists/advisors for analysis of the final data; contingency and consumables under which are listed stationery, phones, fax, printing, computer consumables, Internet connection charges, etc.

Cama expects the project to yield audiovisual archival material equivalent to 14 one-hour cassettes per year. Community lifestyles will be documented on CD-ROM format, to be enlarged with updates. She also expects to edit 14 to 18 two-minute capsules of international quality film which she hopes will be broadcast by the Discovery and National Geographic channels. For archival purposes manuscripts, books, photographs, historical records, craft items, art objects, etc will be collected, cataloged and maintained. Also, "the first in a series of fully illustrated international quality books which will appeal both to the layman and the researcher" will be produced. Since UNESCO is a non-profit organization, all the money generated by the project will be ploughed back into the project.

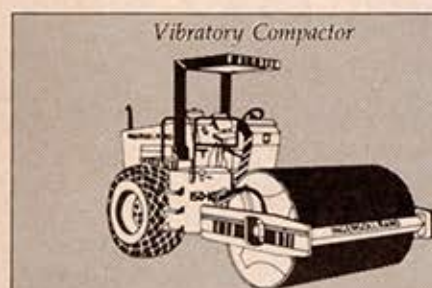
It may be possible to recover about 40 lakh rupees from the sale of books

(2,000 copies) with a weighted average price of Rs 2,000 each) in India and abroad. "Similarly, the CD when complete can recover money which will contribute to other areas of the project," notes the report. In the meantime it is hoped that the community will contribute. Cheques in the name of "UNESCO New Delhi" may be sent to UNESCO House, 8 Poorvi Marg, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi 110057.

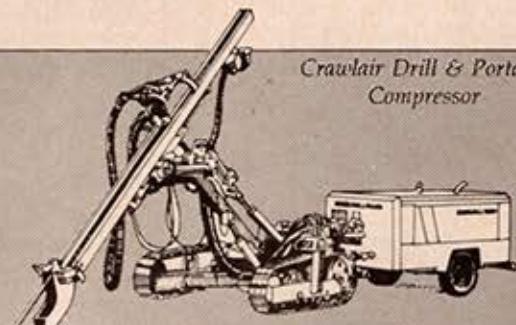
Among the "intangible" benefits of the project, Cama's list begins with the sensitization of the community at the grassroots to the importance of preserving the Parsi Zoroastrian ethos. She hopes to revive the practice of "core customs" which subconsciously contributed to Parsi success and to create an awareness in the community of its tangible and intangible wealth, "blending... old and new values for development." In addition, it is claimed that the project will generate information on assistance available through the Government of India to preserve the heritage of the community and the country.

Cama says she came to Zoroastrianism through English literature, having found a reproduction of the fravashi in a

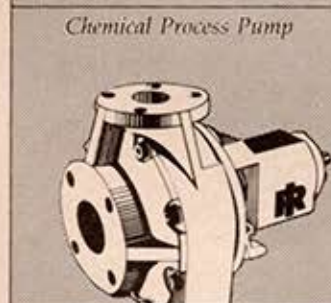
continued on page 56



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Preserving Parsi Zoroastrian Culture And Heritage

May we request you to spare a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire which is part of a UNESCO assisted project? Thank you, Dr Shernaz H. Cama.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone no _____

Place of birth _____

Date of birth _____

Marital status _____

How long has your family lived at present location _____

Education _____

Profession _____

Family structure _____

No. of members _____
(Joint/Nuclear)

If children live separately indicate whether in India or abroad. Specify country if abroad _____

Are any members married outside the community _____

How many are unmarried in the family and over 30 years
☐ Male/s ☐ Female/s

How many are
☐ over 75 ☐ over 65
☐ between 12-65 ☐ under 12

Languages spoken _____

Which newspapers do you read _____

Do you subscribe to or receive:

☐ Parsiana ☐ Hamazor
☐ Jam-e-Jamshed ☐ Mumbai Samachar
☐ FEZANA Journal ☐ FED
Newsletter

Are you

☐ Behdin ☐ Osti/Osta

If Osta, have you had any formal religious training _____
(Indicate level) _____

Are you

☐ Fasli ☐ Kadmi ☐ Shahenshahi

Do you see yourself as a

☐ Parsi ☐ Irani

If Irani, indicate since how many generations in India _____

If Irani, do you have any ancestors in Iran _____
(Specify locations)

If Parsi, do you have roots, relatives, family house in Gujarat; small town/village _____

(Please specify)

Do you have a family tree _____

How far back does it reach _____

Can you provide a photograph or sketch of it _____

Are you a member of your local anjuman or any other Zoroastrian body (Specify): _____

Which is your primary place of worship
☐ Dadgah ☐ Agiary ☐ Atash behram

How often do you visit the fire-temple
☐ Daily ☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly
☐ On special occasions ☐ Never

If no fire-temple in area, how do you compensate for it _____

Have you visited Udvada Iranshah: _____

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how often and when

☐ Seldom ☐ Regularly ☐ Never
☐ After navjote ☐ After marriage

RITUALS

Please feel free to add any other observances.

Which of the following do you observe. Kusti Prayers

☐ Daily ☐ Twice/thrice a day

☐ After every visit to toilet ☐ Never

Do you observe other prayers as under:

☐ Muskil-i-aasan, Behram roz

☐ Ava mahino, Ava roz

☐ Adar mahino, Adar roz

☐ Farvardin mahino, Farvardin roz

☐ Meher mahino, Meher roz

☐ Tir mahino, Tir roz

☐ Ardibehest mahino, Ardibehest roz

Do you observe the Bahman mahino

☐ entire month ☐ part of it

Ghambars with local community.

Indicate which ghambars (specify months) _____

Do you light a divo?

☐ Daily ☐ On special occasions ☐ Never

If yes, ☐ is it oil based ☐ electric

☐ Is there daily loban in the house

☐ Do you light agarbattis instead of loban

Where would you dispose of the cold ashes of your home loban _____

Do you say the

☐ Jamva ni baj ☐ Vasidi kusti

Is menstrual seclusion for women observed

☐ Yes ☐ No

Please indicate whether the women follow any of the following restrictions

☐ Not cooking during menses

☐ Not entering fire-temple, or

☐ Area of household worship

☐ Washing hair after menses ends

☐ 40 days seclusion after childbirth

☐ Nahn after childbirth

Have you ever had a Nahn (excluding

navjote and marriage ceremonies)

If yes, how often

- ☐ Once in a year ☐ After severe illness
☐ On special occasion (indicate briefly)
☐ Never

Wedding rites

Does a wedding in your family include:
☐ Madavsaro ☐ Adarni ☐ Khichri ni reet ☐ Supra-ni-reet ☐ Lagan-na-garba
(If any other please specify) _____

Childbirth

Which of the following are observed
☐ Paachmasu ☐ Agharni
☐ Delivery at mother's house for the 1st child ☐ Chhati no lekha
☐ Vahuman on 6th day after birth
(Indicate ritual used) _____

☐ Besnu for baby (Indicate ritual) _____

☐ Pag laddu for baby
(Specify any other) _____

Is the Rasi system followed

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you know your Rasi

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

How did you dispose of your children's umbilical cord _____

Navjote

Who taught you the prayers
☐ Mehtaji ☐ Priest ☐ Parents
☐ Other relatives
(specify) _____

Would you be able to explain the basic symbolism of the Sudreh _____

Kusti _____

Which prayers did you learn for your navjote
☐ Shahenshahi ☐ Kadmi ☐ Fasli

Before your navjote did you learn the
☐ Sarosh baj ☐ Din-no-kalmo
☐ 101 names of Ahura Mazda
☐ Any other prayer

Do you know any garbas/songs associated with navjote _____

Do you see the navjote as a

- ☐ Social occasion
☐ Religious occasion ☐ Both

Have you ever discarded or stopped wearing the sudreh/kusti ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, at what age _____

Why?

- ☐ Fashion ☐ Peer pressure
(e.g. Boarding school)

Do you possess your own copy of the

- ☐ Khordeh-Avesta ☐ Tamam Avesta
Is it in ☐ English ☐ Gujarati
☐ any other language

Funeral Rites

Do you have a functioning dakhma in your locality ☐ Yes ☐ No
If not what arrangement exists _____

Are continuous prayers recited till paidust

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are prayers said after paidust

- ☐ At home ☐ At bungli ☐ At fire-temple
☐ Not said at all

Do you observe prayers after death for

- ☐ 3 days ☐ 10 days ☐ 30 days

Do you follow

- ☐ Sarosh nu patru
☐ Uthammna ☐ Pachli raat nu uthammna

Do you perform monthly roz and date prayers ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, for ☐ 3 months ☐ 6 months
☐ 1 year

Are the muktads performed for each individual in your family ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, then for ☐ 1 year ☐ 5 years
☐ 10 years ☐ 30 years

Are muktad tables

- ☐ For individuals ☐ Family table
☐ Anjuman tables ☐ Don't know

Are separate tables proving difficult because of ☐ Lack of priests ☐ Expenses
☐ Both

Other Rituals

Jashans

How many jashans are performed annually (if not certain give approx.)

Specify if in your home

- ☐ Under your anjuman's arrangements
Do you attend
☐ Regularly ☐ Seldom ☐ Never

Are jashans performed (Khushali na Jashan) by your family for

- ☐ Birthdays ☐ Anniversaries
☐ Move to new job
☐ Move to new house
☐ On an auspicious occasion ☐ Never

Do you have the farishtas performed

- ☐ Regularly ☐ Seldom ☐ Never

Do you have maachis performed

- ☐ Regularly ☐ Seldom ☐ Never

Do you have the baj performed

- ☐ Regularly ☐ Seldom ☐ Never

Do you have a ses in your house

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you perform tili & sagan on

- ☐ Birthday ☐ Navroze
☐ Proceeding on journey
☐ On special occasion

Do you have a patla in your home

- ☐ Yes ☐ No
Is it used ☐ Regularly ☐ Seldom
☐ Never

Do you personally recite any of the following

- ☐ 101 names of Ahura Mazda
☐ Sarosh baj ☐ The yashts
☐ The niyashes ☐ The nirangs

Do you recite/know special yashts/nirangs for

- ☐ Healing (physical and mental)
☐ Warding off evil
☐ Protection of family
☐ Protection during childbirth

If you recite any for other reasons, indicate which and specify reason _____

Daily Reet-Rivaj

What type of food is eaten in your home:
☐ Parsi ☐ Indian ☐ Western ☐ Mixed

On 'sagan' days do you celebrate with traditional food ☐ Yes ☐ No

Would it include

- ☐ Dhan dar patio ☐ Palav/dar

☐ Ravo/sev ☐ Sweet dahi ☐ Fish
Any other special meals (specify) _____

Do you have dhansak on a charum on your family
☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you know how to make/Do the family members make
☐ Dar ni pori ☐ Patrel ☐ Malido
☐ Achar ☐ Badam/Copra pak ☐ Popatji
☐ Any other traditional dish

Do you sing
☐ Monajats ☐ Garbas ☐ Khyal
Indicate if any other _____

Frequency of such singing
☐ Daily ☐ Seldom ☐ Never

Do you have chalk patterns on your doorstep
☐ Daily ☐ On auspicious days
☐ Birthdays ☐ Never

Do you put up torans of fresh flowers/leaves
☐ Birthdays ☐ Auspicious days ☐ Never

Do you have bead torans over your lintel
☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you wear the sudreh kusti daily
☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you wear the mathubanu/topi
☐ Yes ☐ No

Sapat/pagdi/pheta on auspicious occasion (male Parsi dress) ☐ Yes ☐ No
Ejar/sari (ladies dress) ☐ Yes ☐ No
Indicate whether in Gujarati Style

Do you wear new clothes on
☐ Birthdays ☐ Navroze

Do you have a 'sagan' bath with milk, rose petals/rice on your birthday
☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you ever have aachu-michu/ovarnas performed ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, ☐ with water ☐ with egg
☐ with coconut
And on what occasion
☐ Birth ☐ Marriage ☐ Navjote
☐ Receiving relatives
☐ Any other occasion

Would you cut your hair or trim your nails after sunset
☐ Yes ☐ No

How do you dispose of cut nails, milk teeth etc _____

Would you visit a fire-temple after cutting your hair, without a head bath
☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you keep a mirror at your entrance to reflect away bad luck ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you wash hands/do kusti outside the entrance of your house after a funeral
☐ Yes ☐ No

How do you observe the Gatha days
☐ Prayer of the Gathas at home
☐ Visit fire-temple

Would you ☐ Stitch ☐ Cut hair/nails
☐ Shave during Gatha days

How do you pay your respects to the Fravashis during muktads
☐ By attending muktads occasionally
☐ By attending muktads on all 10 days
☐ By having muktads of family at home
☐ No special method

Did you have the paheli sari ceremony
☐ Yes ☐ No
Pagdi ceremony ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you keep any pets, indicate
☐ Dog ☐ Parrot ☐ Cat ☐ Any other

Would you consciously eat a cockerel
☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you know the legend of and do you give respect to "Sadda mama" (Chameleon) ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you look after community (stray) dogs ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you feed a pregnant bitch
☐ Regularly ☐ Seldom ☐ Never

Do you support animal welfare associations ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you keep the kutra no bukh rivaj
☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you keep the gai ne rotli rivaj
☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you offer praise to Ahura Mazda in the char deesha no namaskar
☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you offer homage to the sun and

moon ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you offer flowers/coins to water when first crossing it on a journey
☐ Yes ☐ No

When you plant crops/seedling do you recite an Ashem Vohu ☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you cut flowers after sunset
☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you say any special prayer on chandraat ☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you start new actions on amavas
☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you have a Zoroastrian calendar in your home ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, is it in ☐ Gujarati ☐ English

Do you know the 'roz' today
☐ Yes ☐ No

Which calendar do you follow
☐ Shaheshahi ☐ Fasli ☐ Kadmi

Do you read/recite Gujarati stories at home ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you know
☐ Legends of Parsi history
☐ Stories from the Shah Nameh
☐ Family stories/legends
☐ Stories about Zarathushtra
☐ Comic stories Mamai-ni-Musafri, etc.

Does your family pray together
☐ At home ☐ At agiary ☐ Never

Do you have samast bandagis at your local place of worship ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did you play any of the following childhood Parsi games
☐ Kakario kumar ☐ Dada-no-dangodo
☐ Alakhi-re-pallakhi ☐ Ta-ta-tabadi
☐ Pavra pois

If any other please name and quote rhymes if possible on another sheet of paper _____

Crafts

Are you or any family members able to
☐ Weave a kusti ☐ Make a sudreh

Do you know the special prayers which accompany the above ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you ever seen a kusti being woven

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you know its symbolism ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you know the specific requirements in a sudreh (indicate whichever you are aware of) _____

Can you or any family members make torans with beads ☐ Yes ☐ No

Can you or any family members make diva-na-kakra ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you or any family members ever embroidered a ☐ Kor ☐ Topi ☐ Gara
If yes, was it ☐ By hand ☐ By machine

Which embroidery stitches do you know (Specify or indicate number) _____

Can you or any family members make ☐ Sapat ☐ Pheta ☐ Pagdi

Do you know a Parsi hadvaid (bonesetter) whom you have used ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you ever used a traditional 'laep' for pain ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you attend plays/concerts ☐ Yes ☐ No

Which kind

☐ Adi Marazban type plays
☐ Other Gujarati plays
☐ English plays ☐ Garbas
☐ Puppet shows ☐ Music concerts (Specify)

☐ Indian Classical ☐ Western Classical
☐ Indian pop ☐ Western Pop

Do you have ☐ Cable TV ☐ VCR
☐ Music system ☐ Transistor
☐ Computer ☐ CD ROM facilities

Do you have audio tapes of monajats/ Parsi songs ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you seen Zoroastrian videos ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you have Zoroastrian books in your home ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, are they ☐ On religion
☐ On history ☐ On rituals

Have you attended lectures or conferences on Zoroastrianism ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, were they by ☐ priests ☐ visitors ☐ local authorities

Do you have religious classes for children in your area ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you visited ☐ The Bahrot Caves
☐ The Walking Tree ☐ Bhika Behram no kuo ☐ Goti Adaran ☐ Any other special Zoroastrian sites

Medical

Are you aware of G6PD deficiency ☐ Yes ☐ No

How many members of your family, if any, are affected by this deficiency _____

Have members of your family suffered from

☐ Serious eye problems
☐ Retina ☐ Macular degeneration
☐ Cornea problems ☐ Haemophilia
☐ Osteoporosis ☐ Alzheimer's Disease
☐ Sulpha allergy
☐ Cancer (indicate which) _____

Did you have grandparents/parents who lived to be over 90/80/70 years ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you give in charity ☐ Regularly ☐ Seldom ☐ Never

If you donate would it be to
☐ individuals ☐ institutions
☐ Parsi charities ☐ agaries

Have you ever received charity/assistance from ☐ Parsi trusts ☐ Govt of India ☐ individuals ☐ other (specify)
Was it for ☐ education ☐ daily living
☐ housing ☐ medical ☐ To start a business/ profession
Other (specify) _____

Are you ☐ proud ☐ ashamed
☐ indifferent being a Parsi

Do you believe your future lies in ☐ India ☐ abroad

Do you see yourself first ☐ as an Indian ☐ as a Parsi/Zoroastrian

Who is the Parsi Zoroastrian you admire most (in the past) _____

(in the present) _____

Would you write in Gujarati or English or have recorded on tape "My Experiences" on how

☐ You were brought up, your childhood and later life

☐ What you remember about your grandparents

Any other information you would like to share. Indicate _____

☐ Written ☐ Tape

Would you like to help us in preserving /reviving aspects of Parsi/Zoroastrian culture ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes then how can you assist

☐ By collecting oral material from knowledgeable relatives, priests

☐ By storing old photographs / records

☐ Helping in field work

☐ Financial contribution

☐ Teaching children songs / stories

☐ Translate works

Would you require to be paid

☐ Yes ☐ No

Could you work as a volunteer with expenses paid ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you aware of the Census of India regarding community decline

☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you prefer to marry/have your children ☐ marry a Parsi

☐ not marry if it is not a Parsi

☐ leave it to personal preference

Would you like to have ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 children

Do you know/sing the *Chayyé Hamé Zarthoshti* ☐ Yes ☐ No

How many verses _____

Signature of the person and date _____

The above questionnaire pertains to only one part of the project dealing with traditions and customs. Other questionnaire/s will follow.

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A Long Journey sadly cut short

Audiences in India will never get to see the full version of
Such A Long Journey due to the censors

Burjor K. Karanjia

Often enough a successful literary work needs to be adapted to cinema's needs. The movie version of *Such A Long Journey*, on the other hand, succeeds because it adheres as closely as possible to Rohinton Mistry's novel bearing the same title. This is because the novel's strength lies not so much in its two parallel plots as in the array of off-center characters belonging to the Parsi community.

Gustad Noble (played by Roshan Seth) is a banker by profession, deeply religious by nature and quite rigid in his approach to life. He has made up his mind that son Sohrab (Vrajesh Hirjee) should continue his studies at the IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) after graduation. Sohrab has other ideas. This leads to a confrontation between father and son, much to wife Dilnavaz's (Soni Razdan) discomfiture, and Sohrab leaves the house.

The other crisis in the family is brought about by neighbor Jimmy Billimoria (Naseeruddin Shah) who was very friendly with Gustad and his wife, but leaves his residence at Khodadad Building suddenly and quite secretly, without even bidding them goodbye — till one day, out of the blue, he seeks Gustad's help on behalf of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), in a secret political matter of national importance. This plot is based on the notorious Nagarwalla case in which Nagarwalla was alleged to have imitated the Prime Minister's voice in a call to a bank and withdrawn Rs 60 lakhs in the Prime Minister's name. He was subsequently arrested and died in jail in mysterious circumstances.

Billimoria involves Gustad by calling upon him to take custody of Rs 10 lakhs and deposit the amount in the bank where he works. Gustad seeks his bank colleague Dinshawji's (Sam Dastoor) help in depositing the amount. The bank has a stiff, straight-backed manager,

Madon, who is also a strict disciplinarian. To offset him, there is his well-endowed secretary, Laurie, with whom Dinshawji is considerably enamored.

The obedient Gustad at the bank is quite different from the dominating person he is at home. Dilnavaz hardly dares mention Sohrab's name. For Gustad, Sohrab is dead. Naturally, neighbor Ms Kutpitia (Pearl Padamsee), who has made up for the frustration over losing her own son by learning black magic, takes Dilnavaz in hand and leads her to engage in all sorts of far-fetched, crazy tricks to bring Sohrab back. When all these fail, Kutpitia tells Dilnavaz that the final drastic step will have to be taken if Sohrab is to be brought back — somebody has to lose his life in the process. That somebody turns out to be the half-witted Tehmul (Kurush Deboo), who appears preoccupied most of the time scratching his armpits or his groin in a revolting fashion.

Gustad pretends he does not miss Sohrab and lavishes his affection on his daughter Roshan (Shazneen Damania). When all remedies fail to cure her of a persistent diarrhoea, he takes her to the genial, garrulous Dr Paymaster, who examines her thoroughly. Gustad is naturally anxious to know from him what her problem is, but the good doctor launches on a commentary on the world's problems till Gustad impatiently cuts him short — an uproarious scene.

Gustad's troubles on the home front are minor irritations. An empty disused wall right in front of Khodadad Building is used as a urinal and for heaping garbage. Gustad gets a street painter (Ranjit Chowdhry) to paint gods and goddesses the entire length of the wall, with miraculous results. People who used the wall to throw rubbish or empty their bladders now come with offerings of flowers!

But trouble is brewing on another front. Newspapers carry disturbing re-

ports of Billimoria's "swindle" and his arrest. Gustad receives summons from the go-between Ghulam (Om Puri) to go to Delhi where Billimoria is lying in a precarious condition in the jail hospital. To Gustad he appears to be in his last throes and is shown being given an injection that has horrendous physical reactions. Even so, Billimoria musters strength to whisper in Gustad's ear: "Our wonderful Prime Minister uses the RAW like the KGB, to do all her dirty work." And again: "She, the Prime Minister chose me to train for supplying arms... money for supplies re-routed by Prime Minister to her private bank account."

The movie's strongest point is that it is faithful to the original novel. If the 339 pages of *Such A Long Journey* have been successfully telescoped into a one hour, 40 minutes film, it is largely due to the craftsmanship of the screenplay writer Sooni Taraporevala and the film's editor, Jeff Warren.

In fact Warren's editing of *Such A Long Journey* earned the "Achievement in editing" distinction at the 19th Annual Genie Awards (Canada's equivalent of the Oscars) presentation on February 4, 1999. Altogether the film was nominated for 12 Genie Awards and won prizes in three, the other two categories being "Performance by an actor (Roshan Seth) in a leading role," and "Achievement in overall sound."

Director Sturla Gunnarsson brings out the story's nuances with tact and understanding. The crowds and the chaos of the city's streets have never been so dramatically presented (no wonder, Gunnarsson is a documentary filmmaker). The music too is unforgettable, echoing and reechoing the story's moods.

The delineation of a middle-class Parsi family and of the eccentric neighbors in Khodadad Building is done with the minutest attention to detail and splashes of good humor. Apart from Gustad, his wife Dilnavaz, the black



*Scenes from Such
A Long Journey:
(alongside, from
left) Shah, Seth
and Puri and
(below) Damania,
Seth and Deboo*

Photos: Sharon Stephens

magic practitioner Kutpitia and Dr Paymaster, the novel's characters include the bellicose Mr Rabadi who stands at his window every morning chastising God for the error of His ways for doing the wrong things to the right people and the right things to the wrong people; the inquisitive Inspector Bamji who is such a busybody; and the street painter who is not only an artist, but a scientist and a philosopher. "Life is the spit of gods and goddesses," he murmurs as he pads away softly on his bare feet at the novel's end.

All the actors' performances are good to excellent. But Seth's rendering of Gustad is truly memorable. Far, far more effective than the one-dimensional portrayal of Pandit Nehru in a television serial. His bank colleague, Dinshawji, is played with restrained clowning by Dastoor. In Tehmul's role Deboo somehow fails to bring out the pathos underlining his craziness. His sexual frustration is truly pathetic — even the prostitutes will have nothing to do with him despite him offering them the coins he has been collecting for their favors. He has no resort but to copulate with the doll he has stolen from Gustad's daughter, Roshan. In the novel, if I remember correctly, Tehmul is depicted masturbating with the naked doll in front of him. One feels this might have been more tasteful than showing him copulating, which is visually ugly. The camera could have focussed on his face, capturing the excitement and the ecstasy.

The film ends on an unforgettable

note. While the wall in front of Khodadad Building is being demolished in order to widen the road, Tehmul is hit by a brick in the resulting commotion and killed. The residents and neighbors stand around his dead body making all sorts of suggestions on how to dispose of it. Without a word Gustad comes forward, kneels, putting one hand under Tehmul's neck and the other under his knees, lifts him like a child and carries him up the staircase to his room.

There he lays down the body, places the doll he loved "not wisely, but too well" by his side and, covering his own head with Tehmul's used pyjamas, begins praying for dead Tehmul's soul. His alienated son, Sohrab, who had come home to visit his mother, and has been watching all this in wonder and admiration, now hesitantly comes forward to say: "Daddy, it's Sohrab." Gustad turns and moves forward to embrace him, running his fingers through his son's hair and mumbling "Yes!" and again, "Yes!"

What the censors in India object to (the Nagarwalla episode) has appeared in more or less the same form in several



newspapers. Surely, the freedom of expression granted to one medium cannot be denied to another? The censors may argue that cinema audiences are comparatively immature, but the fact is that the censors themselves are immature, tied as they are to a censorship code that a committee appointed by the government itself, the Khosla Committee of Film Censorship, found outdated and out of touch with current realities!

Thus a film of outstanding merit produced by Paul Stephens and Simon MacCorkindale and distributed by United Studios Limited is made to suffer because of a prehistoric code, and audiences in India are deprived of a moving and enriching experience which, irony of ironies, has been enjoyed by audiences in foreign countries wherever this film has been released.

Patra on a platter

Lagan nu bhonu can be enjoyed every evening at Jimmy Boy

Jerroo Irani

It is at Parsi weddings that one sees the almost mystical attachment that the minuscule community has to food. A banana leaf smeared with a pat of blood-red pickle; steaming hot patra ni machhi slathered in green chutney and wrapped in banana leaf; sali boti, tender pieces of mutton and apricots floating in a red gravy; an aromatic pulao and dhansak dal. These are the ingredients of a Parsi nirvana. No self-respecting *bava* or *bavi* worth his or her dhansak would down this gourmet repast without tingling gulps of red raspberry to cool the raging gastric fires.

Now one doesn't have to wait for the first spate of invitations that come with the onset of the wedding season. Jimmy Boy at Bank Street (a primarily commercial area in south Bombay) offers lagan nu bhonu for Parsi cuisine aficionados and brave hearts who want to savor its chilli-hot delicacies.

Brainchild of Aspy Irani, a returning native who had migrated to Australia in 1989, the 80-cover eatery resembles a jazzed up Irani restaurant. The typical black chairs (some say they were imported en masse from an indeterminate East European country), whirring ceiling fans, handmade tiles along the walls, hand-polished wooden beams overhead — the spirit of Cafe India, the precursor to Jimmy Boy, still lingers.

The same sensitivity to nuance and detail comes across when one talks to the 47-year-old entrepreneur who is passionate about his latest venture, particularly his stroke of genius — serving lagan nu bhonu at dinnertime. (The eatery has two avatars — it's a fast-food restaurant by day and an ethnic Parsi eatery by night.) "It was an idea whose time had come," says Irani who is disarmingly modest though he and his innovative restaurant have been the subject of a media blitz. Most of the nights are celebrity-studded and one evening we saw MTV VJ Cyrus Broacha walk in for dinner with his buddies and on an-

other occasion, media icon Pritish Nandy came to savor this heartwarming fare. There were also a couple of bejewelled dowagers, young newlyweds and elderly couples. When we went there for lunch one afternoon, the eatery was full of businessmen and executives pecking on burgers and nibbling French fries. Jimmy Boy is rarely empty, it would seem, and even in the evenings it is reasonably full.

Success is obviously within Irani's grasp. "Yes, the restaurant is a hit," he says with characteristic modesty, pride flaring briefly in his hazel eyes. "It was a fluke. I played a hunch and I had a gut feeling that the restaurant would succeed," says the restaurateur who graduated from Dadar's Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition. "As a Zarathoshti I say my prayers every day. This helps naturally." His main marketing tool has been word of mouth publicity that he has earned for being innovative and extending the city's culinary horizon to include a feisty, largely unsung cuisine.

The lagan nu bhonu is the three-month-old eatery's main drawing card. "The success of a restaurant depends primarily on the food it serves, which should be good and consistent," says Irani. The wedding feast is conjured up by a Gujarati chef whose skills have been marinated and richly simmered after decades of cooking for Parsi households. Deftly, the chef turns out saas ni machhi, murgli na farcha, mutton pulao, dhansak dal, kid ghosh, etc, with an expertise that would put many Parsi housewives to shame.

The menu of the wedding feast changes every day. We tried the lagan nu bhonu (Rs 250 for non-vegetarian and Rs 150 for vegetarian — inclusive of taxes), served on trimmed banana leaves placed on melamine plates — saria served in a bread basket, Parsi rotlis and aachaar were the prelude. What followed stormed our tongues in an ag-

gressive confusion of flavors that is the best part of a Parsi feast. We believed Irani when he said, "I taste the food before it's served. It won't be served unless I approve of it."

Our delight was undiminished by the fact that the dessert list was not entirely authentic. Apart from lagan nu custard and kulfi, it included mousse and brownies which are unheard of at a Parsi wedding. Yet they were crafted to perfection. Much of the meal was heavy, ribsticking and loaded with meat which is as it should be. Though Jimmy Boy is a temple to the carnivore's creed, vegetarian sensibilities are taken care of with vegetarian snacks and quick meal platters (non-vegetarian snacks are priced at Rs 45 and the vegetarian ones range from Rs 25-35).

"Equally important is personalized service," feels the graying, bespectacled restaurateur who learnt this important truth during his stint Down Under. In Sydney, he owned and ran Hot Breads, a small outfit which retailed oven-hot breads, pastries, etc and which won him the Small Business Award. "When you smile and welcome your guests personally, it makes a big difference," says Irani. The lagan nu bhonu gourmet comes across as a warm, easy-going person who does not package himself for the media, mouthing quotable quotes, but is a storehouse of basic homespun wisdom. He speaks with the conviction of a faith healer and the persuasion of a life insurance salesman. "You have to be committed and success will follow. You don't need a permit room and dancing to make a success of your restaurant. But you need to have the guts to be different. Zarathoshtis have a lot of talent. There are so many architects and chartered accountants. If you are innovative, you'll be on the right track."

Apparently, Irani is on the right track and the stories are multiplying. A sardar from Punjab read about Jimmy Boy in a magazine on his Delhi-Bombay flight

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(Top row) Jimmy Boy: satiating Parsi palates (Photo: Gustasp Irani) and Aspy Irani. (Below) Gulnar and Aspy (right) with their daughters and Jamshed and Gaver Irani (left)



and decided he had to try out the new restaurant, especially since his mother was a Parsi. Irani recently had a group of 10 Gujaratis, residents of Hong Kong who had heard about the opening of Jimmy Boy and decided to try it out on their next visit to Bombay. A neurosurgeon who was bound for Canada for his nephew's navjote decided to host a small party for his Parsi and non-Parsi friends at Jimmy Boy since he could not afford to fly them there for the festivities. "I'm happy that I did a good deed and the surgeon got to celebrate his nephew's navjote in style here too."

Irani ascribes a good deal of his success to his parents Gaver and Jamshed and the fact that he has earned their blessings. He

had migrated to Australia in the wake of his father's adamant refusal to change the way he ran his Bristol Bakery in Mahim. "I am a self-starter and highly motivated. I like to change, to innovate. My father wanted to continue running the business in the same old way and refused to expand. So I left, frustrated."

However, Irani's relationship with his parents was always warm and loving and he promised them that he would return to India, should they need him. When his father fell ill in 1994 (and later passed away in the same year), Irani returned home to help run the family business. His mother passed away soon after. While his wife Gulnar and three daughters (Nazneen, Delnaz and Michelle) continued to reside

in the Lucky Country, Irani stayed behind to run the bakery. Even to this day the family shuttles back and forth. "I kept my promise and got his blessings. *Naam raakhyu* (maintained the family's name and respect)."

When his uncle Boman Irani who ran Cafe India fell ill, Aspy's entrepreneurial bells rang once again and he decided that he had at last found his long awaited break. Despite the fact that people were sceptical about the fledgling restaurant's success, Irani soldiered on. The rest, to repeat a cliché, is history including the story of how the eatery got its unusual yet apt name. Irani related how he would call his father Jamshed regularly from Australia and greet him with, "Hi, Jimmy



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Boy." That's how the eatery came to be christened Jimmy Boy, enshrining the memory of a father who was tough yet loving, stubborn yet giving.

"I remember coming to this very restaurant as a boy and having to wait at tables, being made to wash the cups and saucers after school (St Mary's)," he recalls. He didn't realize then that he was destined to have a close and wonderful relationship with the same eating house. "This is what made us tough. Today's Zarathoshtis have become soft. Even in Sydney I used to make my older daughter help out in the business, so she would know what life is about. That way they earned their pocket money."

His greatest accolade, says Irani, came from Vithal Kamat, of the chain of Kamat restaurants. "I salute you for doing something different and not selling out. These days no one wants to put in hard labor," said the fellow restaurateur who told the budding tycoon that most of his restaurants were formerly Irani eateries. Irani feels that even if an Irani bun-maskachai restaurant that isn't doing too well is converted into a Chinese eatery, it is preferable to selling out. "It means that they are moving with the times. Zarathoshtis should make the maximum use of their assets," he asserts.

When talking about the community threatened with the specter of extinction in the new millennium, Irani urges that one shouldn't look at the issue with blinkers on. "One should work out a deal to bring children of intercommunity marriages back into the fold. Unfortunately, our younger generation is not so well informed about the religion and hence they may stray. For instance, the Muslims and Christians make a conscious effort to preach and inform the young about the basic tenets of their religion." While Irani would prefer to have Zoroastrian sons-in-law, he knows that if his daughters do marry outside the community, there isn't much he would be able to do about it.

Ultimately, Irani, it seems, does not rule the roost — either at home or in the business — like a tyrannical autocrat. He does not sit at a *galla* (cash counter), symbol of authority and power in a traditional Irani joint. "I have all my systems in place and can keep tabs on everything," he avers. In his case, it is obvious that most times easy lies the head that wears the crown. He leans back and sighs, "Naturally, it's tough sometimes. But I have no regrets."

Banking on Cama

He is the first Indian, and the first Zoroastrian, to head the British bank in its over 100 years of operations in India. Zarir J. Cama took over as the chief executive officer (CEO) of The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) on October 1, 1999, succeeding Dyfrig John who is to be the deputy chairman and CEO of HSBC Bank Malaysia Berhad, according to the Bank's press release.

"I am excited at the prospect of working in a positive and dynamic economic environment in India. I look forward to seizing opportunities to increase our business here and continue to provide our customers with world-class banking and financial services," asserted Cama.

As CEO, Cama heads a network of 26 branches in eight cities in India. As country head, Cama will also be the chairman of the securities and capital markets operations which provide investment banking, research and equity brokerage services. "We want a customer to bank with us right from the cradle to the grave," Cama told *Corporate Dossier*, October 1-7, '99, the weekly supplement of *The Economic Times*. "Either you offer the customer what he's looking for, or someone else will," said Cama.

HSBC's origin in India goes back to 1867. In 1959 HSBC took over the operations of the Mercantile Bank which had started in India in 1853, according to Bank sources. The HSBC group is one of the world's largest banking and financial services organizations, headquartered in London, with over 5,000 offices in 79 countries, states their Bank profile.

Cama joined the Bank 31 years ago. After two years of training in London he returned to India, working in various operational capacities and becoming chief accountant of the Bank in India, states his bio data. In 1982 he moved to the group's international corporate accounts division in Hongkong. Two years later it was back to India as head of merchant banking. In 1988 he was posted to Saudi Arabia in charge of corporate

banking at the Saudi British Bank Limited, a group associate, and he rose to become its deputy managing director. It was then on to Hongkong as senior manager, group corporate planning, in Hongkong Bank's international department, with specific responsibility for the Bank's overseas business in the US, UK, Malaysia, South Korea, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

As senior executive, Global Banking Services, HSBC Holdings plc in London, Cama reported directly to the HSBC group's CEO. In March '98, he moved back to India as deputy CEO. The HSBC group had assets worldwide of US\$ 497 billion as on June 30, 1999, according to their press release.

At ICICI Bank's helm

"I have travelled the full circle," says Hoshang Noshirwan Sinor, managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO) of ICICI Bank. "When I started my career in banking 34 years ago, it was in the private sector, I later saw social control and banks being nationalized. Now I have come back to the private sector and I have found the past two years fruitful and rewarding."

Terming ICICI (Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India, which currently holds the major part of the Bank's equity) a "professionally run organization where creativity can prosper," Sinor joined ICICI Bank as executive director in July '97, becoming MD and CEO in June '98. "When I joined I had set my sights on making ICICI Bank number one in the new generation private sector banks. We have already increased our volume of business threefold to become the largest of the new generation private sector banks. Our aim now is to record the largest profits among our peer competitors," states Sinor.

Set up in 1994, ICICI Bank was one of the first banks established under the new banking policy of the Government of India. The Bank now has 60 branches, 11 extension counters and 85 ATMs (Automated Teller Machines) all over India, notes a bank official. With its

registered office in Baroda and corporate office in Bombay, the Bank had total assets of Rs 6,982 crores as on March 31, '99, according to Bank sources. "The whole assignment (with ICICI Bank) has been so much more satisfying," asserts Sinor.

Born in Bhavnagar, Gujarat, Sinor joined the Central Bank of India in 1965, states his bio data. He moved to the Union Bank of India as direct probationary officer in 1969. He has served on various committees of the Indian Banks' Association and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). He was part of a sub-group on the revision of the CMA (credit monitoring arrangement) format at the RBI under the Tandon committee and a member of the recent Kannan committee on MPBF (maximum permissible bank finance).

Though he started in the clerical cadre, by 1977 Sinor was elevated to senior management position, according to his bio data. As regional manager, south Bombay, he was in charge of the Bank's biggest region. He soon became assistant general manager and was for a year and a half the chairman's executive assistant. In 1994, on elevation as general manager, he became head of the North Zone at Delhi.

In 1996 Sinor moved to the Central Bank of India as its executive director, joining ICICI Bank the following year. His multifarious banking experience has seen him participate in training courses at the INSEAD Institute at Fontainebleau near Paris and at external training centers like NIBM, Poona and Administrative Staff College, Hyderabad, state Bank sources. Sinor has travelled extensively in the USA, Canada, Europe and South-East Asia.

Platinum plaudit

Business World has ranked Glaxo India Limited as India's most respected company in a survey covering 229 companies and over 2,000 respondents. "This is a great all-time achievement, in a long record of successes that Glaxo India has had. It is also a very fitting recognition to re-



Cama: first Indian to head HSBC



Sinor: banking on creativity



Khurshid Khan: long record of successes

ceive as we complete 75 years," the company's managing director Homi Khusrokhani said. The criteria included, besides market capitalization and turnover, quality of product and service, quality of leadership, innovativeness, customer orientation, eco-friendliness, etc. The survey, conducted once every two years, was spread across 15 Indian cities.

AFL alliance

In the first service of its kind in the country, AFL Limited (formerly Airfreight Limited), the company which launched air freight forwarding in India in 1945, entered into a strategic alliance in August '99 with IQL (Institute of Quality Limited) and NIIT (the second largest information technology services company in India) to provide consultancy in the area of "supply chain management," according to a company press release.

Cyrus Guzder, AFL's chairman and managing director, stated: "It is important to bring in newer concepts and practices in supply chain management from

around the world." AFL, with its turnover of Rs 620 crores in '98-'99, brings to the alliance its expertise in logistics of over five decades, with its infrastructure of 200 offices and service centers all over India, 3,900 employees and 1,200 PCs (personal computers) connecting offices, hubs and key customers like McDonald's for whom the company moves by the tonne, in refrigerated trucks, ingredients like cheese from Baramati, lettuce from Ooty and Dehradun and meat patties from Hyderabad, according to its published figures.

The new Supply Chain Consultancy Services (SCCS) will bring better speed, quality and agility in supply chain management, which is a loop that begins and ends with the customer, states their company handout. SCCS will also undertake research and development to provide solutions grounded in the realities of the Indian business world.

Back to advertising

Noshir Desai, former senior director in Lintas who quit advertising four years ago to set up United Studios Limited (USL), is returning to the ad world by joining the Bombay-based Triton Advertising, states the fortnightly maga-

zine *Business India* (Aug 9-22, '99).

Having set up USL, which according to Desai is the largest television post production/live coverage/animation network in South East Asia, which co-produced with a Canadian group the film *Such A Long Journey* based on Rohinton Mistry's novel, "there was no challenge left in running it on a day-to-day basis," said Desai. As executive director of Triton, Desai will run the agency and have a share in the profits as well, states the magazine.

Compiled by Hilla P. Guzder



Guzder:
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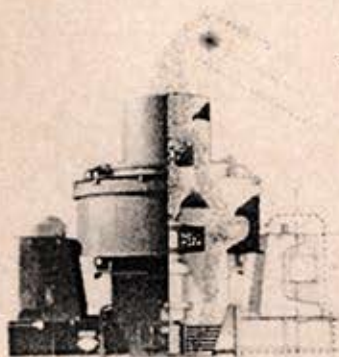
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Anatomy Analysis

The late Dr Bomi Sethna ensured that his students grasped the basics of anatomy

Dr Aspi M. Mehta



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best wishes
from

**Farah
&
Tanya**

Using colored chalk and a few graceful sweeps of his hands, he would add a few lines here, rub off a few lines there, and layer upon layer and structure upon structure of any anatomical region would be revealed till, at the end of the lecture, he would have presented an entire region as well and as completely as an actual dissection would show. His students' admiration and awe were apparent: they would be loath to rub out the chalk drawings for days on end.

The hallmark of the late Dr Bomi Burjorjee Sethna's career was his remarkable success as a teacher coupled with his striking simplicity as a person. As professor of anatomy, Sethna's proficiency and excellence stand unrivalled. With his methodical approach and lucid explanations, the subject became easy to grasp. A few lines written down in the class as he spoke served as adequate foundation for any further reading.

Thousands of his students spread all over the world, some of them honoraries in major hospitals, will vouch that in Sethna who died on June 29, 1998 we did not just have a tall man but a tall teacher, a towering personality who looked upon all as his equals. He was strict yet fair in academics, gentle and soft-spoken and ever so kind and courteous.

He served as undergraduate and post-graduate examiner in several universities all over the country. His just and understanding nature inspired confidence amongst candidates as a result of which the fear of examinations was actually replaced by attempts at better performance.

Sethna's dedication towards anatomy is reflected in the magnificent museums at the Grant Medical College (GMC) and the Miraj Medical College.

The GMC museum was probably the best in Asia during his tenure and Sethna along with the late Dr Firoze Dastur had the lion's share in making the museum a reality.

Sethna was born in Bombay on August 21, 1916. His father expired when he was barely three years old. He was brought up by his mother, and the lack of wherewithal for his education was a very real concern. But he overcame it all by diligent study and the numerous scholarships he earned as a brilliant student. After passing his matriculation in 1935 he joined Wilson College where he passed



Sethna: strict yet fair in academics

his Intermediate Science in 1937. He joined GMC from where he passed his MBBS in 1941, earning a gold medal. He did his medicine and surgical house posts in 1942-43 and joined as a demonstrator in anatomy at GMC in 1943. He rose to be a lecturer in anatomy there in 1945. He passed his MS in general surgery in 1945, earning another gold medal, and his BSc (Med) in 1953 with distinction, taking human anatomy, histology and embryology as his subjects. He passed his MSc in 1954 with a first class, again taking human anatomy, embryology and comparative anatomy along with anthropology. He was appointed professor of anatomy in 1948.

In 1960, the state government sent him on a scholarship to Oxford University in the UK where he worked under Prof Le Gros Clark in neuroanatomy and embryology. When he returned, the government appointed him Dean of the Miraj Medical College to establish it from scratch. The institution's reputation is in no small measure due to his dedication and hard work in the years he headed it. A man's value can truly be judged by what he has to offer the world.

Treasured on the Island - 3

Monumental mark

In public service and government institutions Sri Lankan Zoroastrians left their indelible imprint

After being shipwrecked in the turbulent waters of the Indian Ocean a handful of Parsis landed in Ceylon in the early 17th century. In the 18th century, some adventurous Parsis had sought to establish themselves on this beautiful island as planters and shopkeepers. By the 19th century the community was so well respected that on the formation of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce in 1839, Hormusjee Espandiarjee and Shapoorjee Hirji were the only two non-English members invited thereon.

At the beginning of the 20th century Zoroastrians in Ceylon numbered less than a hundred, reaching their peak of over 350 prior to World War II. Then followed the exodus and today around 60 Zoroastrians remain in Sri Lanka (see "The Zoroastrians of Serendip," *Parsiana*, January 1999).

Starting with the July-August issue, *Parsiana* is chronicling the achievements of prominent Sri Lankan Zoroastrians of the 19th and the 20th century. These are edited excerpts from Behram Kaikhushroo Billimoria's historical compilation, *The Parsees in Ceylon*, culled from the memoirs of Framroze Rustomjee and K. D. Choksy. Written about nine years ago, factually there may be a change of circumstances for some of the individuals mentioned herein although we have imposed on Sri Lanka's respected legal light Kairshasp Choksy's time to check the episodes for accuracy.

The first instalment detailed the success story of Dady Muncherji also known as Dady Parsi who was a merchant held in high esteem by the locals as also the Europeans who patronized his shops. Transport facilities too came within his purview in the early 19th century and there are references to his establishment running the palanquin facilities for the convenience of passengers.

The coffee estate and exports of Cowasjee Eduljee Colombowalla earned him substantial wealth and he used a part of it to donate a burial ground for Parsis in Colombo, mentioned the second instalment. (This old burial ground in Kottanchina was in use prior to the present one on Jawatte Road, acquired for the community by Pestonjee Dinshawjee Khan.) To Framjee Bhikhajee and Company goes the credit for making possible the influx of many Parsis from India. The Khan Clock Tower and the Crippled Children's Ward bear testimony to their largesse. Framjee House was the venue for all Parsi festivities and it was also customary to have an "open house" for all Parsis every Sunday, it was recounted.

The rags to riches story of Rustomjee Muncherjee who had assiduously toiled to build up his business empire and invariably presided over every meeting of the community is related in this third instalment. Among the leading professionals of the 20th century were Homi Framroze Billimoria who enjoyed the distinction of serving as the first Ceylonese (the previous incumbents being English) chief architect of the public works department of the government and Dr Rustom Pestonjee who had served the King during World War I and returned with distinctions in war service. Some of the imposing structures erected by Billimoria are the Independence Hall, The Elphinstone and Majestic Theatres and Navroz Baug. As superintendent of the Leper Asylum in Hendala, Pestonjee played host to the Parsi community every Christmas when they gathered there to celebrate the occasion with the patients.

Another revered medical practitioner was Dr Dadabhoi Pestonjee Banajee who had served the Maharaja of Morvi before being appointed member of the

Colombo Municipality, states the fourth instalment. Even though the Maharaja followed Banajee to Ceylon to persuade him to return, Banajee's wife would not allow it for one of his duties was to taste the food before it was served to the Maharaja which she felt could endanger his life. The legal fraternity's claim to fame was Nariman Kaikhushroo Choksy who was appointed King's Counsel and his son Kairshasp who officiates as President's Counsel. The Prayer Hall and priest's residence known as Navroz Baug were constructed by Meherbai who was keen to fulfil her husband Pallonjee Nowrojee Kapadia's dream project.

The Parasmani Hall which is in use by the Parsi Sports Club was the combined effort of Framroze Rustomjee who donated the land and Ruttonshah Rustomjee who bore the cost of construction, it is explained in the fifth instalment. As per Ruttonshah's last will, every year the community is invited to a dinner at the Navroz Baug on a date close to his death anniversary. The academician Kaikhushroo Billimoria, who as principal of the Dharmaraja College was responsible for building up the center of learning into a reputed institute, was always happy to host Parsi visitors to Kandy as theirs was the only Zoroastrian family resident there.

Many other outstanding Parsis have their roots in Ceylon. Professional, business and/or family commitments may have persuaded them to settle in other lands. But their accomplishments are fondly recalled in the final episode of this treatise on Sri Lankan Zoroastrians.

...

In 1860 there arrived in Colombo a young man of the age of 15 years — Rustomjee Muncherjee. As a boy of nine, he had left Bombay without in-

forming his parents or relatives and proceeded on a schooner to Aden promising to work for his passage. He remained in Aden for three years working for the well established Parsi firm of Adenwalla. When he arrived in Colombo in 1860, he had brought a letter of recommendation from the Adenwalla firm as a hardy young boy capable of undertaking any honest job or work. This letter was addressed to Framjee Bhikhajee and Company and Dinshawjee Khan took a fancy for this boy and employed him in the firm on a meager monthly salary of Rs 15 with all food. He was given an allowance for clothing and shelter was provided at the firm. This proved an excellent home for the boy Rustom, as he was then called, and he did his duties wholeheartedly.

During his off hours he was sent on errands involving responsibility for the handling of cash and his sincerity of purpose and his willingness to please any member of the staff of this firm earned him a great name. Dinshawjee requested him to spend three hours a day in a nearby school to enable him to read and write English. This school was the Royal Academy (later Royal College). Dinshawjee then put him onto the job of rubber-stamping the receipts of payment of bills after due verification. He proceeded from strength to strength. Dinshawjee was keen to see that he understood every segment of the business from letter-writing to making out orders for goods.

When Rustom was 20 years of age he appealed to Dinshawjee to permit him to go to Kandy to work with a textile business. Dinshawjee was most unwilling to part with Rustom but as he did not wish to spoil the boy's future chances, he allowed him to go. However Dinshawjee placed a sum of Rs 500 in his establishment to the credit of young Rustom as a gratuity and requested him to draw on it whenever he needed money. After a few years in Kandy Rustom decided to return to Colombo where he started his first, own, independent business of oil stores. Rustomjee Muncherjee

made a great name for himself and the Parsis in Ceylon as one of the enterprising businessmen of Colombo.

He toiled strenuously to build up his business. His probity of character, honesty and integrity became known in

for flour and other imports to his equally honest and most helpful business friend and companion Pallonjee Nowrojee Kapadia who had a similar business established in Fourth Cross Street in the Pettah of Colombo.



Exterior and interior of Navroz Baug

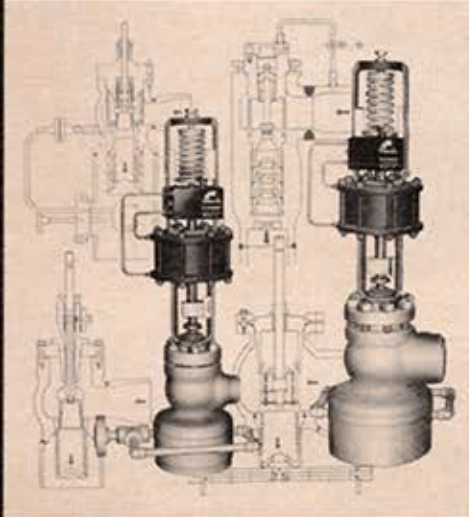
Colombo. His shop used to be besieged for the purchase of the purest ingredients he put up for sale. A prominent section of his business was the import and sale of gold and silver thread. The material he sold was of the highest quality at one fixed price. Among his constituents were the nuns of the many convents in Ceylon. His price for all the commodities in his shop was always fixed. No one ventured to bargain with him for any article he sold. He also imported large stocks of flour from Bombay and Australia. He left for Bombay in 1869 where he married. He then set up his home in Colombo with his wife Jerbai (née Netterwalla). He had five sons and a daughter, named Hormusjee, Dr Munchershaw, Darabshaw, Dr Maneckshaw, Framroze and Avabai. He retired from business in the year 1914. He gave over his agencies

Rustomjee Muncherjee by a decree of the District Court of Colombo, confirmed by the Supreme Court, was appointed a trustee of the Ceylon Parsi Anjuman Properties and Funds along with Jamshedjee Rustomjee, Justice of Peace (JP), for the western province, and Jehangirjee Kai-khushroo Hormusjee, a member of the Municipal Council of Colombo. By common acclaim of the entire Parsi community of Ceylon, Rustomjee Muncherjee, who was then the oldest member of the community in Ceylon and had always presided over every meeting and function of the community, was regarded and known as the president of the Ceylon Parsi Anjuman. He served as trustee and president until the day of his death in 1929 at the age of 84 years.

The first Ceylonese to graduate from the Liverpool University with an honors degree in architecture obtaining distinctions in design

was Homi Framroze Billimoria. He was elected an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects. On his return to the island he joined the Public Works Department (PWD) of the Government as a temporary assistant architect but unfortunately his services were terminated in October 1931 owing to retrenchment during the depression. He then set up a private practice having been elected a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects. He established the firm of Billimoria and De Silva and they were responsible for many of the well-known buildings in Colombo like the Elphinstone Theatre, the Majestic Theatre and Navroz Baug. He built a large number of private bungalows, too numerous to enumerate, among which was Mumtaz Mahal — a luxurious residence facing the sea at Colpetty which is now the residence of the Speaker of the Parliament. In March 1936 he was recalled by the Govern-

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ment and having acted as chief architect on numerous occasions between 1938 and 1951 was finally confirmed in the office of chief architect in 1953 which appointment he held until his premature demise in 1956. He had the distinction of being the very first Ceylonese (and Parsi) to be appointed chief architect of the PWD — all the previous holders of that office being Englishmen.

The work that earned him the highest fame was the Independence Hall built when Ceylon gained Dominion Status in the year 1947. He was also the one who designed the Bandaranaike Memorial Ward at the General Hospital and in 1952 he was conferred the honor of MBE (Member of the British Empire). Later in recognition of all his numerous services, Queen Elizabeth II created him an officer of the Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the year 1954. Earlier he had received the Coronation Medal. He married Munnice, the eldest daughter of Pirisha and Dinbai Karanjia and they had three children, named Veera, Jamshed and Pheroze.

He was one of the most hard working servants of the Crown and the whole of Colombo and all his friends in the outstations were shocked to hear of his sad and untimely demise on June 10, 1956 at the age of 54 years. Homi had established a memorable record of work in Ceylon and his popularity among all classes of people in the island was manifested at his funeral which was attended by the governor-general and all the dignitaries of Ceylon in addition to an unprecedented large gathering of his numerous friends and admirers. An appreciation of him appeared in the *Times of Ceylon*.

"Monday June 11, 1956, will be long remembered as a 'black Monday' in the annals of the Public Works Department, for we woke up to the rude shock of the news of the sudden and untimely death of Homi F. Billimoria, chief architect, which had occurred in the early hours of that morning.

"Homi's affable manner was extended to everyone — Christian or Hindu requiring his expert advice on their building projects.

"Every government official received from him the highest cooperation and attention ungrudgingly at all time, despite the fact that he was one of the busiest officers.

"The outstanding feature of his life

was his never-failing friendship and courteous manner towards all, and his preparedness to assist anyone, even people he had never met before, who came to him with their problems whether they were official or personal.

"Truly, in the words of the director of Public Works (at an assembly of the PWD in honor of the lost one), 'The late Mr Billimoria was a gentleman and a

There was a mutiny and Dr Pestonjee was stoned by a mob. One stone hit him on the forehead and drew blood

clean man — clean inside and out. His ideal was peace, and he was a man in a million..."

In the year 1875 Limjeebhoy Pestonjee Billimoria came from Bombay to join the firm of Cowasjee Eduljee Gazdar and Company, rice merchants of Colombo. Limjeebhoy later acquired a bakery from Rustomjee Muncherjee and Company and carried on a business as bakers and confectioners in Chatham Street, Fort, Colombo under the name of Rustomjee and Company. He later entered the business of the Britannia Restaurant at the corner of York Street and Chatham Street. The business of Britannia Restaurant was handed over later by Limjeebhoy to his son-in-law Cawasjee Merwanjee Nilgiri who ran the business for many years. On the death of Limjeebhoy in 1899, Nilgiri also took over the business of Rustomjee and Company which had by then been named the Ceylon Bakery.

Nilgiri was one of the most energetic, popular and singularly interested members of the entire Parsi community in Ceylon. For many years after the death of Pallonjee Kapadia he functioned as the secretary of the Ceylon Parsee Anjuman Trust. He was of the utmost assistance to all the trustees of the Ceylon Parsi Anjuman Trust. Ill health compelled Nilgiri to leave Ceylon for treatment and he died shortly thereafter in Bombay in 1944. His death was a severe blow to the whole Parsi community whose affairs were wholeheartedly managed by him. The business of the Ceylon Bakery was handed over to his sons Dady and Lim.

The book *Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon* edited by Wright and published in 1907 has this to say on pages 502 and 503 about Rustomjee and Company: "The firm of Rustomjee and Company, bakers and confectioners... are well-known manufacturers of all kinds of biscuits, confectionery and bread, and possess the only electrically driven machine for the manufacture of biscuits in the island, the latter comestibles being turned out in many shapes, varieties and sizes. The bread, made by hand, not only has an extensive local sale, but is also supplied to far up-country districts. Large contracts are also held with the various local stevedores and ship chandlers for the supply of bread to the shipping of Colombo. Messrs Rustomjee and Company are noted for their catering for weddings and entertainments of all kinds, wedding cakes being a speciality of the firm's manufacture. They are also bakers and confectioners to the governor of Ceylon. Altogether the firm employs from 80 to 100 employees. Besides the central factory in the Fort, the firm has a branch at Rifle Street in the Slave Island quarter of the city. The whole concern is under the managing directorship of Cawasjee Nilgiri, who was born at Ootacamund, Madras, was educated in India and came to Ceylon in the year 1896. He is a member of the National Association of Master Bakers and Confectioners of England and Ireland."

In the year 1875 there came to Ceylon Rustom Pestonjee along with brother Limjeebhoy Pestonjee Billimoria. He was born in 1867. After his arrival in Ceylon he attended Wesley College in Colombo, where he distinguished himself in science. He then joined the Ceylon Medical College and obtained his qualification as a doctor. Thereafter he joined government service and served in various hospitals throughout the island. He later obtained British qualifications and was appointed superintendent of the General Hospital in Colombo in or about 1907. Dr Pestonjee served the King during World War I, leaving Ceylon in 1915 and returning in 1918 after having obtained distinctions in war service. He was appointed superintendent of the Leper Asylum in Hendala where he worked devotedly among the lepers and distinguished himself for his memorable service for over 20 years. On his retirement from the Leper Asylum his

portrait was unveiled there.

Dr Pestonjee's brother, Limjeebhoy Pestonjee Billimoria, had financed his education throughout and was greatly devoted to this brother. Dr Pestonjee on retirement lived in Wellawatte and devoted himself to music. He was a brilliant violinist and was a member of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Colombo.

He also served as a trustee of the Ceylon Parsi Anjuman Funds from 1939 to 1944 and took a principal part in all matters connected with the Parsis in Ceylon till his death in 1951 at the ripe old age of 84 years. In addition to his accomplishment as a violinist Dr Pestonjee was a great lover of Indian music and was able to play the sitar and dilruba to perfection. He was also a keen astronomer and had a powerful telescope with which he used to scan the heavens.

In *Science of a Lifetime* published in 1967 savant Dr Lucian de Zilva wrote: "Dr Pestonjee, a Parsi, was a tall, athletic man, an officer in the Ceylon Army of Volunteers. I have never met a man who thought less of money or more of honorable conduct. He was satisfied with his pay which gave him sufficient leisure for philosophy and music... He was one of the first violinists in the Colombo Symphony Orchestra. I used to visit him almost every Sunday at his bungalow overlooking the sea and river. The windows overlooking the sea had broad sills and I usually found him sitting cross-legged there playing the violin or the dilruba. His predecessor had been too old and feeble to call to order some of the able-bodied men who did just as they liked; lepers went out of the gate into the village and had food in the boutiques. They grew vegetables between the wards at the asylum which stood in a park of many acres. Not liking the food supplied from the hospital kitchen, they cooked their meals on the verandahs of the wards on fireplaces of three stones. Worst of all was the gambling and the fights. The coconut, jak and other trees on the grounds yielded an income which was divided among the inmates, a stupid thing to have done when they could not go out and spend it. The

result was gambling and drunken riots with the poor old superintendent shivering in his shoes.

"Dr Pestonjee faced a task like that of Hercules clearing the Augean stables. He put a strong guard at the gate to stop free passage through it. He cleared away all the fireplaces on the verandahs. He stopped the giving of cash, kept an account of what was due to each person and once a week the bullock cart of a Muslim trader came into the ground like Santa Claus with sweets, soap, cigarettes, Jaffna cigars, colored handkerchiefs, sarongs and saris — in a word with all one's heart could desire and each patient had a little card stating how much he or she could spend.

"But the thugs and rowdies were not pleased. There was a mutiny and Dr Pestonjee was stoned by a mob. One hit him on the forehead and drew blood. The police quickly restored order and arrested the ringleaders. Every superintendent, as a precautionary measure, is an unofficial magistrate with the right to imprison those convicted of violence.

"The majority of the inmates being quiet and law-abiding men and women were pleased with the reforms and the strictness of the regulations and the Leper Asylum became a Garden of Eden."

In those days the Parsi community used to organize an annual Christmas treat for the patients and all the members of the community used to go there and spend the day as the guests of the good doctor. When the Great War of 1914-1918 broke out, Dr Pestonjee was a member of the Ceylon Light Infantry and readily volunteered for war service. He was accepted and although it was his desire to see active service on the war front, he was posted to the Forces Hospital at Marseilles where the Indian Army wounded were hospitalized. At the end of the War he attained the rank of Major and also earned the War Service Medal among others. He then returned to Hendala to carry on the good work among his patients till he finally retired in 1929, much to the regret of all those patients. He lived in 42nd Lane, Wellawatte after retirement till he passed away in 1951 aged 85 years.

To be continued

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"This damn pain..."

Arnavaz S. Mama

Celebration of the Cells: Letters from a cancer survivor by Russi M. Lala. Published in 1999 by Viking-Penguin Books India (P) Ltd, 11 Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi 110017. Pp: viii+168. Price: Rs 295.

"To recognize that life is larger than cancer — an annoying distraction (from accomplishing anything worthwhile). I treated it as a nuisance. And yet this nuisance has taught me things, altered my life and brought me closer to God — day by day, hour by hour. A thousand sermons could not have done what these renegade cells have in my life."

The thought that Russi Lala recorded in London on July 5, 1995, en route to New York for consultations on his resurgent non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma (NHL) encapsulates much that he has to say in *Celebration of the Cells*. Couched as a series of letters to Vandana Gupta, a middle-aged wife and mother similarly undergoing chemotherapy for Hodgkin's Lymphoma (Gupta came through to found V-Care, an emotional support group for cancer patients and their relatives), Lala's 168-page book focuses on the mental conflicts and physical disturbances in the life of a cancer patient and how these are best resolved by recourse to faith, prayer and a purposeful belief in life.

Cancer was first identified around 400 BC during the time of Hippocrates, notes Lala. "Cancer cells have been found in an Egyptian mummy," he writes. He identifies the Royal Marsden Hospital built at the end of the 19th century in London as the world's first cancer hospital. Surgery, where possible, was the initial line of treatment, followed by radiotherapy resulting from Dr Marie Curie's research. Chemotherapy came into use from the 1960s.

Lala refers to the many types of cancer, their causes, the dietary and other changes in lifestyle that are necessitated by the occurrence of the disease

and ways of coping with the fear/apathy/depression that result from the treatment by chemotherapy which affects the body's cancerous and healthy cells alike. Work and relaxation, walking, music, deep breathing, laughter are other therapies he recommends. "Do not resist the drugs as they are being injected ... into the veins. Welcome them as your saviors. Breathe deeply and relax. Imagine the medicine going into your system, targeting the cancer cells and immobilizing them," advises Lala.



Lala: triumphing over cancer

Nausea, mouth ulcers, cramps, loss of hair, numbness and emotional disequilibrium are some of the side effects of chemotherapy. Since it undermines the immune system it is easy for the patient to fall prey to chills and pneumonia. The Dalai Lama's personal physician advises cancer patients to keep warm, notes Lala who generally wears a scarf round his neck. Referring to the endless nausea that is the chemotherapy patient's lot, Lala advises, "When you retch, don't turn to the left side. The retching gets aggravated. Lie flat or, if you must, turn to the right."

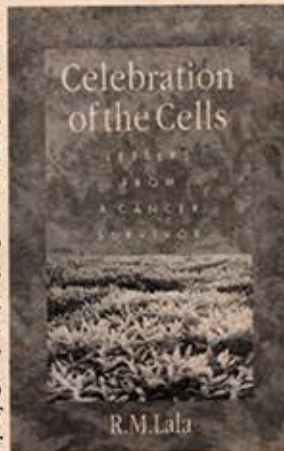
Advising cancer patients to face reality, Lala suggests they make their will, put their finances in order and, even more importantly, set awry relationships straight. "In life one needs spiritual inputs... Most important is the love, affection and care of at least one person..." writes Lala, recording his gratitude for the love and care lavished on him by his wife Freny. Reordering his own priorities so as to continue "to function as normally as possible physically, be at peace mentally and if possible grow spiritually," Lala has found it crucial to take adequate rest even, if need be, to the exclusion of

social life. Everytime he has exhausted himself he has had to pay the price in terms of pain and discomfort. Quoting cancer specialist Dr Purvesh Parikh, Lala writes, "Your body is fighting the disease all the time. The moment it gets tired, the body stops fighting and the disease gets the upper hand. That is why if you can work for 10 hours, stop after eight hours." But gentle exercise like walking has done good. Similarly a change of diet is recommended, veering away from red meats towards fish, fruit and vegetables.

Lala's letters bring to the fore the uncertainty that underlies the life of a cancer patient. "I often think what a waste of time this disease is. Today a blood test, tomorrow the doctors, then more tests and to consider the treatment and take it... When you are well, it hangs like a sword of Damocles. When you are not, it tends to preoccupy you."

Through 10 roller coaster years Lala's job as director of Sir Dorab Tata Trust has beckoned him like a lighthouse; his longstanding commitment to writing has been a lifeline through his "little lymphatic world." He was in the throes of writing *Beyond the Last Blue Mountain*, a biography of J. R. D. Tata, when he first realized he had been smitten in 1989. Completing it had been the goal he had set himself. It stressed him and added to the buoyancy of the NHL but when it was published in 1992 he could thank God and go back to chemotherapy with a mind at ease, earning a three-year reprieve.

"This damn pain..." he grumbled in July 1995. Through the resurgence of the disease he held on for Freny's sake but found "her anxiety complex... heavy to bear" — an insight that could help all caregivers of cancer patients. *The Joy of Achievement: Conversations with J. R. D. Tata* came out that same month.





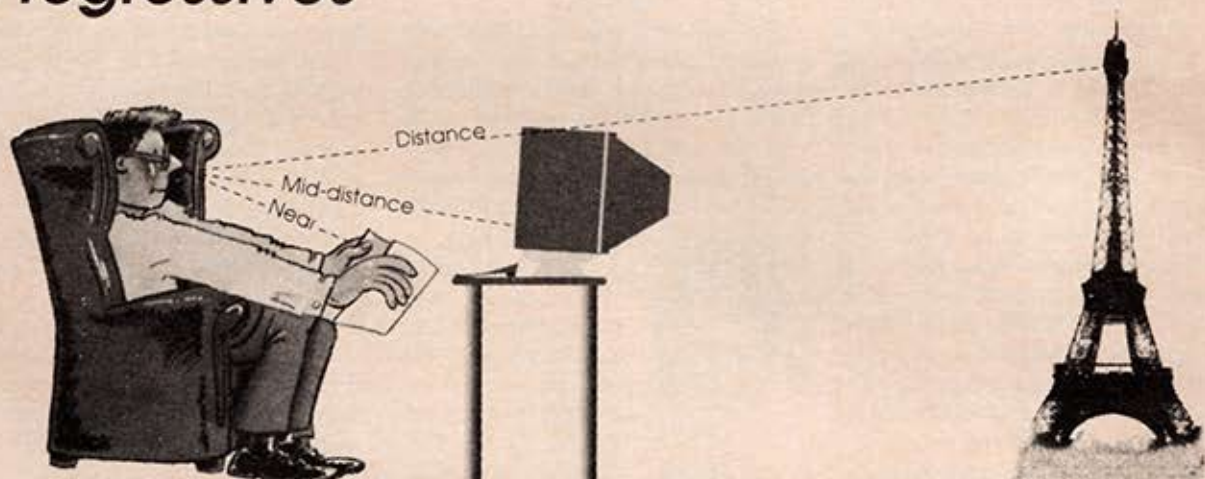
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Flora Fountain: 365, Dr. D.N. Road, Bombay 400 001 Tel: 287 4916, 287 1762 • Dhobi Talao: 614, J.S. Seth Marg, Bombay 400 002. Tel: 201 4906
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He was riding emotionally high, physically low. "Is it possible that love, hope, faith and laughter and the will to live have a therapeutic value?" editor and author Norman Cousins had questioned. Lala's life has affirmed it.

In Part II of the book we learn of Lala's spiritual odyssey from belief to atheism, an agnostic's yearning for proof and the rekindling of faith through the Moral Re-Armament movement. As a result Lala comes through as a strong proponent of Christian literature quoting proficiently from the *Psalms* and other devotional literature. Although he had a Zoroastrian mobed praying by his bedside when he underwent his first chemotherapy in Bombay ("when my boat is small and the sea is stormy, I need the strength that comes from a power higher than my own"), his inspiration stems as much from Beethoven ("It is not what happened to Beethoven that mattered. It is how he took it. In adversity he was free to be creative"), Albert Schweitzer or Father M. M. Balaguer, a Jesuit and former principal of St Xavier's College, who had told him "Prayer is communion with God. It can be done in any of the three ways. The first is when you speak to God. The second is you may speak but you also wait to listen to what He has to say. It is a two-way communication. The third is silent communion. You say nothing and yet feel close to each other."

Along his seven decades of existence Lala has learnt to value a quiet time for himself and his thoughts at the start of the day. Noting these along the years, Lala has drawn upon them in his hours of need, even as he freely acknowledges cherished quotations. In the rambling latter chapters Lala relates stories of spiritual healing. In the chapter "Facing Death" he examines the two aspects of the phenomenon: coping with the passing of a dear one and facing it oneself. "This life is given to you by God and it is only He who has the right to withdraw it," Lala makes his stand on euthanasia known without naming it.

"Each person has a legacy to leave behind," writes Lala, "each person has the choice to be a power for good, an instrument for the betterment of the world in his own sphere."

"There are moments when we want to go but many many more when we want to live on. So learn to live as if each day is your last. And then there are no regrets and every relationship is put right."

READERS' FORUM

continued from page 4

is given a sum of Rs 40,000 every year for education and lodging and boarding expenses of young Parsi priests. A number of poor Parsi families in Bombay and also in rural south Gujarat are given monthly help. A sum of Rs 1,00,000 is spent annually on the needy in the community in rural areas for education, foodgrain, religious ceremonies, etc.

The self-effacing, publicity-shunning Siganporia, in spite of being in her 80s, is still involved in this community service, as if it was her life's mission. Although the community has very handsomely responded to her appeals year after year for help to the less fortunate ones amongst us Parsis, yet much needs to be done and a greater effort is needed to reach out to as many members of the community and as adequately as possible. The Zoroastrian Ladies Committee singularly deserves our utmost support to further strengthen their philanthropic endeavors.

P. D. BHADHA

Distinctive doctorate

We congratulate Parizad Homiar Pestonjamas (née Parizad Tehmuras Sidhwa) on obtaining a PhD in Life Sciences from the University of Mumbai. She earned the doctorate for her research on breast cancer.

She has won various proficiency awards including National Merit Scholarships from the University of Mumbai, twice, for securing a position in the merit list. She was awarded the prestigious Daxina fellowship of the Institute of Science for the highest rank in MSC-I (Biochemistry).

An ardent student of Zoroastrian religious scriptures, she took an active part in various religious competitions conducted by the Iran League for a continuous period of 12 years. She participated in

elocution, essay-writing, *Shah Nameh* recital, Parsi songs and monajats, and other events. Her style of presentation, in-depth study of the subject matter, and oratory invariably won her first prizes. She also gave religious lectures at agiaries.

Behind Parizad's success lies the unfailing and sustained support and encouragement of her parents, and lately

of her husband Homiar and her parents-in-law, but more importantly according to her "the constant blessings and guidance of God, in front of which the power and glory of science are insignificant and trivial."

Ervad PERVEZ M. BAJAN

"The Top Ten"

I feel that my father, the late Prof Sohrab R. Davar who is considered the pioneer of commerce and management education in India, should

be included among the outstanding Zoroastrian greats.

When there was no commerce or management education in India Prof Davar established in 1900, when he was only 20 years old, the first college of commerce in India, "Davar's College of Commerce."



Davar: promoted higher education

As there were no commerce or management examinations in India, he used to take batches of students to England by boat to appear for the examinations conducted by the London Chamber of Commerce, International Accountants, Incorporated Company Secretaries, etc. Later he managed to persuade those bodies to conduct their examinations in India for those who could not afford to go abroad.

Thirteen years later he helped to establish the Sydenham College of Commerce and held the Chair for Mercantile Law and Business Organization at the Bombay University, and taught these subjects at the Sydenham College for nine years. His were the first and only books published (by Butterworths) in those subjects.

Presiding over the first Bombay Legislative Council when it was set up in Poona, he announced the name of Mr Pakvasa as president of the Council.

Besides being a barrister-at-law, a Member of the Legislative Council and a Justice of Peace, he was also a Member of the Municipal Council and was asked to be the mayor, which he declined due to ill health. He passed away at the age of 70.

Founder principal Prof Sohrab R. Davar's government recognized Davar's College of Commerce is now 99 years old and in a few months will attain its centenary.

Dr KHORSHED D. P. MADON

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi

MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 25 and 37 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 31 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 29 and 40 years, averaging at 34 years.

Births numbered 13 and deaths 62 in Bombay for the month of August. Heart disease took a toll of 19 lives of whom 11 were 80 years and above. Nine victims fell prey to cancer and five each to pneumonia/lung disease and septicemia. Diseases

of the liver and brain and bronchitis claimed three Zoroastrians each whereas two patients each succumbed to old age/general debility and dehydration. Among the isolated cases were AIDS, urinary tract infection, malaria, arthritis, cerebral malaria, diabetic gangrene, diabetes, sclerosis (abnormal hardening of a tissue), kidney failure, jaundice and fever. Two still-born babies, a girl and a boy, were lost to the community. The age range fluctuated between 43 and 93 years. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for Au-

gust, in Bombay, was 73 years.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjuman in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. This information is not always complete or consistent: we are unable to carry data from areas where the anjuman do not furnish the particulars; the birth figures for Bombay are supplied by four hospitals — births in suburban hospitals and private nursing homes are not included unless individuals send us information together with a

copy of the birth certificate. There may be an inadvertent repetition of names in the marriage list when a civil marriage precedes a religious ceremony. In the break-up of deaths according to illnesses, especially of the elderly, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

If readers have any births/marriages/deaths they would like published, some proof to ensure the veracity of the report would be required. We are sure our readers would appreciate this requirement and cooperate with us.

BARODA

BORN

A girl, *Zinatra*, to *Hutoxi* and *Jarsis Bonesetter*, sister to *Mahzarine* on August 2, 1999

BOMBAY

BORN

A girl to *Sarvar* and *Rohinton Jaorewalla*; August 8
A girl to *Farzana* and *Adil Dastoor*; August 12
A girl to *Parizad* and *Rohinton Bandorawalla*; August 14
A girl to *Zareen* and *Jimmy Patell*; August 16
A girl to *Kashmira* and *Burjis Mistry*; August 17
A girl to *Ayesha* and *Neville Mody*; August 18
A boy to *Shirin* and *Rohinton Wadia*; August 19
A boy to *Ayesha* and *Darius Soonawalla*; August 22
A girl to *Khushnam* and *Rohinton Polishwala*; August 27
A boy to *Yasmin* and *Navzer Sarkary*; August 27
A girl to *Jasmine* and *Pervaz Daruwalla*; August 30
A girl to *Anahita* and *Aadil Elavia*; August 30
A girl to *Suneeta* and *Manu Narula*; August 30

MARRIED

Meher Farokh Vasan and *Adil Dinyar Sutaria* of Middlesex, UK; August 3
Shernaz Jal Ghadially and *Hector Nariman Daruwala*; August 29

DIED

Noshir Sorabji Gabla (66), residing at 7, Belvedere Court, Opp Oval Maidan, Churchgate, 400020; July 31
Eruchshaw Ardesir General

(85), 20/51, New Contractor Bldg, Victoria Garden Rd, Byculia, 400027; July 31
Minoo (Minocher) Hormusji Adajania (78), B/8, Shiv Krupa, Kulupwadi Rd, Borivli (E), 400066; August 1
Shirin Merwan Irani (85), Safalya Ahimsa Marg, Khar, 400050; August 1
Noshir Gustadji Olpadwalla (69), Talati Bldg, 194, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; August 1
Eruch Dadabhai Adenwalla (93), Automobile Company Bldg, 41, Queens Rd, 400020; August 2
Freny Kaikhushroo Batliwalla (60), Dubash Bldg, Kashinath Rd, 400034; August 2
Jer Hoshang Doctor (85), A/4, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; August 2
Jal Sorabji Mehta (89), N/26, Sector 7, Vashi, New Bombay, 400703; August 2
Daravus Jehangir Mistry (45), T/24, Godrej Baug, Napean Sea Rd, 400026; August 2
Adi Jalbhoy Paymaster (60), 11, Batliwalla Bldg, Khan Est, M. M. C. Marg, Mahim, 400016; August 2
Behram Sorabji Dadachanji (61), 401/7, Tulsidham Co-op Hsg Soc, Manpada, Thana, 400601; August 3
Cooverji Dhanjishaw Daruwala (82), 102, Dhanraj Bldg, Vishal Ngr, Mithchowki, Marve, Malad (W), 400064; August 3
Homi Burjorjee Satpatiwalla (70), Sheri Hse, Gunbow St, Fort, 400001; August 3
Burjorji Jamshedji Elavia (87), P/16, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; August 4

Mehru Dinshaw Jassawalla (82), 796, Dosabhai Mans, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 4
Rustom Ratansha Mistry (80), P/4, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; August 4
Nergish Minoo Tumboli (73), M/11, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; August 4
Dinshaw Maneckji Cooper (88), 515/C, Meher Mans, R. P. Masani Rd, Matunga, 400019; August 5
Ruttonshaw Nanabhoy (82), Jer Mans, 70, August Kranti Marg, 400036; August 5
Dosibai Jehangirji Patel (88), 275/U, New Master Bldg, Zoroastrian Clny, Chikalwadi, Grant Rd, 400007; August 5
Khorshed Pirosha Sakhidas (69), C/o P. P. Kharas, A/19, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; August 5
Jimmy Munchershaw Fitter (58), P/10, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; August 6
Nergish Keki Kermani (58), 20/133, Petit Widows' Chawl, Mody St, Fort, 400001; August 7
Cavas Jehangir Fatakia (84), 4/26, Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; August 8
Shiavax Peshotan Kotwal (87), Jaiphal Ter, 29, Forjett St, 400036; August 8
Ratanshaw Rustomji Porebunderwala (82), G/27, Munsiff Bldg, Tardeo, 400034; August 8
Behram Sohrabji Katrak (87), Nusserwanji Bldg, Alibhai Premji Marg, Grant Rd, 400007; August 10
Merwan Rashid Khosravi (78), Tyre Ter, Dr D. B. Marg, 400007; August 10
Sorab Dhunjishaw Ghandhi

(61), 640/B, Khorshed Villa, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 11
Pilamai Jamshedji Painter (76), 1/11, Dhunbaiwadi, Dadabhai Rd, Vile Parle (W), 400056; August 11
Jimmy Rustomji Batiwalla (58), B/1, Shireen Mans, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; August 12
Rashid Behram Jubani (66), Room no 18, Sidhwa Bldg, 14/A, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; August 12
Burjor Cursetji Reporter (87), Meherwan Mans, 59, Napean Sea Rd, 400006; August 12
Zeris Kaikhushru Toorkey (43), 5/A/1, Park Darshan, Opp Lalubhai Park, Andheri (W), 400058; August 12
Shirinbai Dhanjishaw Bhagwagar (92), C/o Perin Hansotia, B/15, Sagar Sangeet, Colaba Post Office, 400005; August 14
Pestonji Jehangirji Darukhanawala (88), 2/B, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; August 15
Roshan Nariman Wadia (55), Gul Manor, Opp Telephone Bhavan, Colaba, 400005; August 15
Goola Nariman Chowdhry (87), 2, St Helen's Court, Pedder Rd, 400026; August 17
Dina Khurshed Arjani (79), F/18, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; August 18
Phiroze Hormusji Pithawala (77), 33, West Minister, Duncan Causeway, Sion, 400022; August 18
Maneck Ruttonji Kapadia (86), 77, Jehangir Mans, Opp Sukh Sagar, Hughes Rd, 400007; August 19

Rustomji Ardeshir

Chinoy (85), Room no 19, X/96, Godrej Clny, Stn Side, Vikhroli (E), 400079; August 20

Baby boy of Khurshid Jehangir Mistry (stillborn), Engineer Bldg, 265, Princess St, 400002; August 20

Baby girl of Seena S. Irani (stillborn), A, Sanjana Bldg, Forjett Hill Rd, Tardeo, 400036; August 21

Dhun Bapu Mistry (79), E/10, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; August 21

Jamshedji Navroji Mullan (83), 5, Hampton Court, Colaba, 400005; August 21

Awabai Jehangir Poonji (89), 690, Dinsha Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 22

Jal Bomanshaw Khambatta (81), G/11, Ambedkar Ngr, Parel, 400012; August 24

Najoo Noshir Dubash (81), G-1/9, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; August 26

Purvez Shapurji Motafram (62), F/56, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; August 26

Nariman Behramshaw Khambatta (80), Old Faramroze Cama Bldg, Zoroastrian Clny, Tardeo, 400007; August 27

Dara Kaikhushroo Bharucha (75), 16, Sethna Bldg, Princess St, 400002; August 28

Kersi Jehanbux Haivoy (51), 37-17/D, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; August 28

Dinshaw Munchershaw Kapadia (64), Madon Hse, Chira Bazar, Vaka Mulla, 400002; August 28

Ardeshir Bapuji Dhondy (88), 212/C, B. J. Rd, Bandstand, Bandra (W), 400050; August 29

Jer Dhunjishaw Mistry (85), 731, Polson Bldg, Vimadlal Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; August 29

Marzban Phirozsha Mistry (81), 16, Balwant Apt, Rambaug Lane No 6, Kalyan (W), 421301; August 29

Hosang Hirjibhoy Choksy (80), A, Shirin Manzil, Dinbai Petit Lane, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; August 30

Freny Pestonji Daruvalla (87), Tarachand Bldg, Chikalwadi, Tardeo, 400007; August 30

Amy Kersi Homavazir (63), 284, Todiwalla Bldg, Dr B. Ambedkar Rd, Parel, 400012;

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*

	Bombay		India		World	
	This issue	1999*	This issue	1999*	This issue	1999*
BIRTHS						
Boys	3	48	—	7	2	12
Girls	10	53	1	1	2	11
MARRIAGES						
Parsi	2	132	—	7	—	6
INTERCOMMUNAL						
Males married out	—	9	—	—	2	3
Females married out	—	4	—	—	2	2
DEATHS						
CONSIGNED						
Males	43	323	3	63	4	23
Females	21	328	4	51	4	21
CREMATED						
Males	—	2	—	1	—	—
Females	—	2	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 1999 (January 1999-October 1999 issues)

Overseas deaths are listed in the consigned column as *Parsiana* does not have a breakup of those cremated.

*These figures pertain to information provided to or collected by *Parsiana*. They do not represent the total number of births, marriages and deaths in the Zoroastrian community in India and abroad.

August 30

Jeroo Dadi Katrak (76), Soona Mans, 301, Tardeo Rd, 400007; August 30

Keki Manecksha Poonevala (78), 13/5, Ramakrishna Soc, 9, North South Rd, Juhu-Vile

Parle Development Scheme, 400049; August 30

Feroz Nusserwanji Taraporewala (58), C-10-3, Godrej Hill Side Clny, L. B. S. Marg, Vikhroli (W), 400079; August 30

CALCUTTA

DIED

Dorab Dhunjishaw Mehta, husband of late Khorshed and father of Dina Khory, Cyrus and Noomi; August 17

KATNI

DIED

Gulbanu Cowasji Bajan (85), mother of Dhun Ruttonsha Manager, Dinoo Rusi Colombowalla, Tehmu, late Beji and Dorab; August 28

SURAT

DIED

Dinamai Faramroz Pajnigara (78), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; August 2

Ratamai Navroji Kupar (87), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; August 6

Keki Burjorji Vesuna (75), 138, Cawasji Ngr, Village Adajan; August 8

Ketty Jehangirji Dubash (65), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; August 13

Jehangirji Jamshedji Pithawala (87), Bage Parsa Hse, Loohar Pole, 395003; August 15

AUSTRALIA New South Wales

BORN

A girl, Tishtar, to Nina and Kersi Daruwalla in Sydney; February 7

A girl Anahita, to Mehrnaz and Kurush Bilimoria, sister to Arman in Melbourne; July 22

CANADA British Columbia

MARRIED

Dinaz Homi Italia and Vijay Ajit Rai Marwaha of New Delhi, in Vancouver; June 12

Trudy Piscia and Viraf Reporter, son of Gool and Phiroze of Merritt, in Vancouver; July 31

Niloofer Poulad, daughter of Mitra and Rostam, and Kamyar Mahinsa in Vancouver; August 28

Ontario

BORN

A boy, Jehan, to Benaaz and

Rayomand Irani; August 25

DIED

Dara Nadershah Pithawalla, husband of Mehru and father of Minoo, Jamshed and Nancy in Toronto; June 8

Jeroo Viraf Haveliwala, mother of Dolly, Kaity Patel, Pilloo Navroze and Sheriar; August 3

PAKISTAN Karachi

DIED

Russie Jehangirji Mehta (82), brother of Mamie Jal Byramji, Dara, Themurasp, Freni Behli

Tengra, Mani Jehangir Clubwala and late Phiroze, Behli and Jamshed; August 11

SINGAPORE

DIED

Katy Behramgore Vakil, mother of Ratan and Khorshed Jamshed Unwalla; July 11

USA California

MARRIED

Shilan Om and Arman Sassani in Orange County; May 28

DIED

Mitra Sohrab Khosravi; July 2

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

Of mettle and metals

Parinaz M. Gandhi

Died: Dr Dara Pirojshaw Antia, 84, founder president of the Indian Institute of Metals (IIM) and a father figure on the Indian metallurgical scene, following a massive stroke and a subsequent comatose condition for nearly six months until his demise on May 24, 1999 in Poona.

"He was a phenomenal leader, builder of institutions and an amazing professional," wrote Dr P. Rama Rao, chairman of the Government of India Atomic Energy Regulatory Board who was keen that Antia's

contributions be commemorated with the institution of something more than just a lecture or a medal. "From the historic days of founding the IIM, Dr Antia dreamt and thought about the glory of our Institute and unceasingly strove to realize his dreams..." added Rama Rao.

"If the IIM today has a unique character among professional societies as a very fraternal organization, progressive and liberal in outlook — that cares as much for the younger generation as for the older elite — it is due to the loving care and careful attention that Dr Antia had given to it from the earliest days through the successive stages. He had been the heart and the soul of the Institute," recalled C. V. Sundaram, honorary visiting professor and senior associate of the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore. "He was also an ambassador of goodwill who, through his tireless efforts, secured a rightful place for Indian metallurgy in the world community," acknowledged Sundaram referring to "a dignity, charm and grace about him, a friendliness and deep sincerity of purpose that endeared him to all."

Among the international bodies to condole Antia's demise were The Institute of Materials, London which viewed him as "a highly respected Fellow of this Institute," and The Chinese Society for Metals according to whom Antia

was "a worldwide known professional of materials science."

During his lifetime, the last major recognition to come his way was the



Antia: "builder of institutions"

Life Time Contribution Award in Engineering from the Indian National Academy of Engineering of which he was a founder member. Due to his ill health, this Award was received on his behalf by his daughter Dr Shirin Antia at the hands of the Vice President of India on December 3, 1998. The citation referred to his contribution to engineering spanning over six decades as a metallurgist and management consultant.

Some of the other honors to come Antia's way were the Howe Medal of the American Society for Metals, the Scroll of Honour by the Institution of Engineers, the Platinum Medal from the IIM, the Tata Gold Medal, the first Syed Husain Zaheer Medal of the Indian National Science Academy. The Banaras Hindu University had conferred on Antia the degree of Doctor of Science (honoris causa) in 1983. The international bodies where he was made Fellow were The American Society for Metals and the Institute of Materials, UK, according to his bio data.

He was on the board of many engineering, chemical and metallurgical companies, either as chairman or director. As noted the condolence resolution passed at the board of directors meeting of Binani Metals Limited where Antia was director, "His able guidance, honesty of purpose and devotion to duties and the keen interest he took in the affairs of the company were a source of innate strength to the company for which it owes to him an immense debt of gratitude."

The Asian Industry and Information Services Private Limited acknowledged in their condolence letter, "Dr Antia was not only a director of the company from its very inception but because of his being an eminent metallurgist was a source of intellectual information which

we used towards improving our publications."

"At a personal level he was erudite, sophisticated, charming and on occasions demanding," recalled Prof S. Ranganathan of the Department of Metallurgy, Indian Institute of Science, who had worked as associate editor of *Acta Metallurgica* when Antia was on its board of governors. Antia himself had contributed many papers in Indian and foreign journals on materials science and technology as also on industrial management. He had further served as member of the All India Council for Technical Education and other training institutes. He was associated with the National Metallurgical Laboratory and the Defence Metallurgical Research Laboratory as governing body member, notes his bio data.

A graduate in metallurgical engineering from the Banaras Hindu University, Antia was a research assistant at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA, and obtained his doctorate in physical metallurgy and mineral economics in early 1943. Thereafter he graduated in Advanced Business Management from the Harvard Business School. After a short stint at the Aluminium Laboratories Limited, Ontario, he returned to India in 1944 and joined The Aluminium Production Company of India Limited (now The Indian Aluminium Company Limited). In the following five years he was secretary, Metal Industries Panel, Department of Planning, and later, director of metals in the Government of India. "While in government service Dr Antia was responsible for the conversion of all metal industries from a wartime to peacetime economy," K. R. Vaidyanathan gave him credit in *Minerals and Metals Review Annual*, 1994.

Subsequently he was associated with the British Aluminium Company Limited and with Union Carbide India Limited from where he retired as deputy managing director and then opted to be an industrial and management consultant for engineering, metallurgical and

mineral industries.

Other important assignments he held were as chairman of the Metals Development Council and Mineral Development Board, the Indian Engineering Association and the Indian Non-Ferrous Metals Manufacturers Association, and as advisor to the Tariff Commission, Industrial Finance Corporation and the Industrial Development Bank, mentions his bio data. He had also served as chairman of the Indian Lead-Zinc Information Centre, and as president of the Indian Copper Development Centre.

In addition to his professional commitments, Antia made time for the Cheshire Homes (India), the Indian Metals Charitable Trust, the Anant Pandya Memorial Trust and BHUMET Golden Jubilee Trust where he was a trustee. A keen sportsman who played golf and tennis, during his college days he had represented Uttar Pradesh in the Ranji Trophy cricket tournaments. Being a patron of western music, he had served as president of the Calcutta School of Music for many years.

As noted the former rector of the Banaras Hindu University, Prof T. R. Anantharaman, "Dr Antia was a friend, philosopher and guide to me as he was to hundreds of metallurgists who loved and respected him for his many-splendored personality and for his stupendous contributions to the cause of metallurgical education, research and industry. He will be remembered with gratitude by the numerous scientists and industrialists who had the good fortune to know him and benefit from his incomparable qualities of the head and the heart."

Antia is survived by his wife Jeroo, daughters Dr Shirin and Mithoo, and son Dr Firoz.

DOCUMENTING A LIFESTYLE

continued from page 26

book on the English mystic poet cum engraver William Blake. Tracing Blake's Zoroastrian connection became the theme of her doctoral thesis and Prof Mary Boyce advised her and John Hinnells helped in England for the Zoroastrian part thanks to an introduction by Zoroastrian Studies founder Khojeste Mistree, acknowledges Cama. She found the Zoroastrian impact on Blake interlocked with much in the Jewish tradition. Both these religions and Christianity share the "underground stream of

wisdom," the esoteric tradition of good and evil, light and darkness which underlies all great cultures, including even the Rosicrucians and Reiki, she says.

As a child Cama had attended the original Farohar classes of Piloo Jungalwalla in Delhi. Now in their second generation, these classes are conducted by young mothers like herself who first learnt all about Parsi "rit-rivaj, customs and monajats" from Jungalwalla in the early 1960s. But Cama was doubly fortunate in having her roots in Ahmedabad where her mother Khorshed (née Vakil) brought up her four daughters while her Army officer husband, presently Delhi Parsi Anjuman president Lt Gen (ret'd) Adi Sethna, served terms in non family border postings. The Vakils "used to sing monajats every day. You were never told you have to follow. You just picked up by observing parents, grandparents... being proud of being Indian and Parsi Zoroastrian and seeing how closely they were interlinked."

Involved in post-doctoral research in interfaith at Delhi University where she also lectures in the department of English, Cama edits academically researched books with an illustrated coffee table format for the publishing house Mapin. She has been involved with the publication of Jungalwalla's *The Gathas—Hymns in Praise of Wisdom* which is an illustrated commentary with rare archival material from the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris and New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. Earlier she had helped organize the three-day The Muse and the Minorities festival when "for the first time in the history of India... top creative people of every faith... sat together on a single platform and discussed the need to maintain ethnic identity as well as Indian identity." The theme of "social concerns and creative cohesion" they then formulated became the bedrock of Cama's presentation at the Interfaith gathering "Religion and Conservation," started at Assisi, on April 21, 1999 when she was invited to introduce Zoroastrianism into this world-wide movement.

According to Cama, UNESCO is "looking at Parsi Zoroastrians as an important element of world culture and history. (There is) concern that such a vibrant community is dying out." Having already made an initial reeve into Gujarat, Cama says she found great interest among the communities of Bharuch, Ahmedabad, Surat, Navsari, Bulsar and the villages around them.

She met Sir Jivanji Modi's 92-year-old daughter Bachanmai Bapuji Kanga who sang a monajat for her. Cama says she wants to dovetail her work with that of Dr Homi Dhalla, president of the World Zarathusti Cultural Foundation, who is also working towards the restoration and microfilming of manuscripts. He will also be doing the book on Parsis in politics, says Cama. Jungalwalla has donated six lakh rupees in memory of her husband to restore and preserve the manuscripts in Navsari's Meherjirana Library. The Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) and its chairman Jamshed Guzder have each provided encouragement and financial support. BPP trustee and World Zoroastrian Organisation London vice president Dinshaw Tamboly has consented to be patron of the fund collection drive for the project, informs Cama. Dr Armaity Desai, chairperson of the University Grants Commission, is the sociological expert on Cama's team. She is excited at the receipt of playbills and tickets of a production of *Hamlet* in Bombay in 1899 when famed star John Barrymore and Jal J. Khambatta acted together. There is a photograph of the two of them with an inscription addressed to Khambatta from Barrymore, ex Bombay's Taj Mahal Hotel, saying "with sincerest good wishes and belief in his success in the most beautiful of parts — Hamlet."

Five Gujarati plays by Jehangir Pestonji Khambatta have already been donated to the proposed archives by Shirin Hoshang Vakil. Rohinton Jambusarwala of Bharuch has contributed his grand uncle's library of books. Cama would like the community to be aware that old paintings and manuscripts can be preserved. These items can either be donated to the archives with the donor's name and address — to K. R. Cama Oriental Institute's trustee secretary Homai Modi in Bombay and Dr Kapila Vatsyayan of the IGNCA in Delhi, or guidance can be obtained regarding preservation from the project for those who desire to retain their own collections.

"Perhaps we can put the clock back — find our roots and be proud and regain our lost confidence," dreams Cama who would like the remaining Parsi bungalows, *wadis* and sanatoria in Gujarat's deserted villages to be revived as self-sustaining holiday homes. After all, Parsi cuisine is becoming "the most popular food in Delhi today," she maintains.

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