

**4<sup>th</sup> millennium of Z culture Write-UP FEZANA Journal**  
October 2003

A small land-locked country with lofty snow-capped Pamirs-- which in our geography books used to be referred to as “the roof of the world”-- called Tajikistan approached UNESCO to declare this year as the celebration of 3000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture. Half the population of this small country of 6 and a half million people is of “original Tajik” descent who have maintained in their collective consciousness the ancient history and culture of the land of the “Avesta”, where the Shahnameh of Firdausi is recited as well as the operas of “Rustom and Sohrab” and the “Life and Message of Zarathushtra”. And this after 80 years of religious repression during the communist regime!! The thirst for revival is intense but can the rest of the Zarathushti population in the diaspora satisfy this thirst?

This small act by this small nation state has galvanized the world Zarathushti community in their own quest for reviving and revitalizing their roots, in searching for lost heroes and epics, in claiming a place in the sun of their own culture which became submerged in the dominant culture of the British Empire in India and in the colonies. Communities in North America, India, England and Europe are organizing cultural events to both inform their own members and to inform the neighboring communities of their cultural heritage.

**TAJIKISTAN**

The Tajik Ministry of Culture celebrated this event on September 5<sup>th</sup> which had originally been planned for March 21<sup>st</sup> 2003. The event was marked by a conference to which foreign scholars and guest were invited. There were several non-Zarathushtis scholars from, Germany, California, Paris and Holland. The only Zartahushti presence was that of Dr Mehr Master Moos, President of the Zoroastrian College, Sanjan . An Afarganyu , Kustis and “topis” (prayer caps) were gifted, as well \$3000 towards the building of a Zoroastrian Cultural Centre in Dushanbe, with a room for Atashkadeh, a room for a library, and a room for meetings and Jashans. This has been a desire of the the Tajiks.

Several books were officially launched on this occasion

- 1 The book Yashts Vol 1, coauthored by Dr Moos and Prof Rustom Fuzaylov.
- 2 A book with colour pictures of Yazads and Ameshaspends found in an old Fire Temple excavation in Tajikistan
- 3 Poems from Zarathushtra

The day culminated with a special stage performance of “The Message of Zarathushtra” and the opera “Rustom and Sohrab”

**SWEDEN**

Mobed Jamshid Kamran mentions that preparations are on the way but nothing concrete to report.

**AUSTRALIA**

A committee has been put in place by President Tim Desai of Zoroastrian Association of New South Wales.

### **ENGLAND**

On Shahenshai Navroz YZ1373, as part of the 3000<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, the ZTFE launched a 2 volume CD on the Gathas of Prophet Zarathushtra at the Zarthoshty Brothers Hall in London, This is a professionally recorded CD recited by Ervad Rostam K. Bhedwar, one of the senior mobeds in Europe, in the ancient Yasna tradition . The CD comes with a booklet containing various color photographs on Zoroastrianism. It contains the English transliteration and translation of the Gathas  
Contact Malcolm Deboo [www.ztfe.com](http://www.ztfe.com)

### **INDIA**

The celebrations in India were inaugurated by H.E. Mr K. Matsuura, Director General of UNESCO. He opened the Parzor Exhibition “Pictures with a Purpose” in Delhi, July 10<sup>th</sup> 2003 . A special Parsi Food Festival was also organized as part of the Exhibition. Both these events and a special tribute to the Zoroastrians of India, were mentioned by the Prime Minister of India in his inaugural address to the international conference “Dialogue among Civilizations”.

The Indian National Commission for co-operation with UNESCO and UNESCO PARZOR celebrated the 3000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture on October 2-4<sup>th</sup> 2003 The Governor of Maharashtra presided over the celebrations which were held at Tata theatre. There were multiple events, the inauguration in Mumbai of the UNESCO Parzor exhibition “Pictures with a purpose”. The ceremonial release by Jaswant Singh, the Union Finance Minister, of the five rupee commemorative, limited edition, coin of Dadabhai Naoroji , a film screening of “In War and Peace” , the Life of Field Marshall Sam Maneckshaw, a seminar on Zoroastrian Eco-ethics and Environment , seminar on Demography and Health, a presentation and film on “Zarthushti culture-A Revival” and a film on the Bahrot Caves and Sanjan Excavation. On the last day there was a song and dance performance by the Dance troupe of Shiamak Davar

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### **NORTH AMERICA**

#### *CALIFORNIA*

As part of a series of celebrations for this event, the Persian Zoroastrian Organization on September 5<sup>th</sup> invited Prof Farhang Mehr, former Chancellor of Pahlavi University in Shiraz, and former Deputy Prime Minister in the Government of Iran, to a give a lecture at de Anza college in Cupertino, California.

The California Zoroastrian Centre in co-operation with other organizations in the area is organizing a three day festival “Messages of Zarathushtra and Today’s World Affairs” December 20-23, 2003. The Secretary General of UNESCO Mr Koichiro Matsuura and his wife have been invited, and CNN is planning to send a crew. There will be 6 speakers,

including the Head of the European Union Zoroastrian Studies in Brussels. The Minister of Culture in the late Shah's administration who was responsible for establishing Ministry of Culture and promoting and encouraging Avestan and Gatha studies in the Universities. The late Pourdavoud was one of the fruits of his efforts for the love of Zarathushtra. The languages used during this festival will be English, French, German and Farsi .

Regional US government authorities will also be invited. Contact [emehrfar@yahoo.com](mailto:emehrfar@yahoo.com)

### *CHICAGO*

The Zarathushti International Film Festival (ZIFF) and the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago (ZAC) together with the Council of Parliament of World's Religions and the Columbia College in Chicago are hosting the 1<sup>st</sup> Zoroastrian Film Festival – Chicago 2003- Our beliefs, Our History, Our culture, October 17-18 2003. Visit [www.zac-chicago.org/zfilmfest2003](http://www.zac-chicago.org/zfilmfest2003)

### **NEW YORK**

**A show case of events has been planned for November 15, 2003 (starting around noon) at Metropolitan Hotel, New York City marking the UNESCO-affiliated 3000<sup>th</sup> anniversary Celebrations of the Zoroastrian Culture". The program highlights will include talks by renowned scholars on the influences of Zoroastrianism on other world cultures, opening prayers, a book display table, recorded music and other unique exciting features. Contact [homi\\_gandhi@usa.net](mailto:homi_gandhi@usa.net)**

### **TORONTO**

ZSO will be hosting a list of events from November 28, 2003 to January 31, 2004 with a "Showcase of Zoroastrianism" on November 28. "Youth open House" will be celebrated on Sunday November 30,. In co-ordination with the Mosaic Multifaith Organizations there will be demonstration of a "jashan" on Sunday December 7, The finale will be on January 31 at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) where there will be an exhibit on Persian artifacts, as well as lectures illustrating the influence of Zoroastrianism through the ages.

A special invitation for all the events will be sent to Members of Parliament, city councilors, mayors of different municipalities. A general information booklet as well as a pamphlet are being produced for the public to educate them about Zoroastrianism.

Contact [MIRZAF@tc.gc.ca](mailto:MIRZAF@tc.gc.ca) or [kerman@priest.com](mailto:kerman@priest.com) or [roxannamirza@yahoo.com](mailto:roxannamirza@yahoo.com)

### **VANCOUVER**

A ZSBC committee has been formed to prepare a program.

A Mehergan Music Festival of Music of Ancient Persian Nations and Tribes is planned for October 11, 2003 at Capilano College, N. Vancouver 7-10 p.m. Contact Feri Dehmeri [www.oshihan.org/mehergan.htm](http://www.oshihan.org/mehergan.htm)

## *HOUSTON*

An Interfaith Ministry for Women and the Zoroastrian Association of Houston are planning an event in February 2004 Contact [yasmin.pavri@milliman.com](mailto:yasmin.pavri@milliman.com)

## **ZARATHUSHTI WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL NETWORK (ZWIN)**

ZWIN is sponsoring an exhibition of different aspects of Zarathushti culture on its website. [www.zwin3.net](http://www.zwin3.net) Topics: the Zoroastrian tour; The Zoroastrian Closet (Ghara Gallery and Korr Corner), Zoroastrian Traditions; The Zoroastrian Hall of Fame, the Zoroastrian library. Visit the site and reacquaint yourself with 3000 years of Z culture.

## **GENERAL**

FEZANA has prepared a special power-point presentation on Zoroastrian Culture to be used by member associations for their own celebrations.

A press release has been prepared which will be available on the FEZANA website. Articles in the Interfaith Journals are written to sensitive our neighbours, co-workers and the community about the contributions Zarathushti have made not only to world religious thought but has also enhanced the cultural community around the world.

A 4 hour interview (Domains of Belief) of Prof Kaikhosro Dinshaw Irani with Shahriar Shahriari has been put on DVD and is available to the general public for purchase. Prof Irani discusses the various subjects from Zoroastrianism's influence on other religions, to Einstein and the morality of the theory of relativity. In conjunction with the 3000<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations this tape can be used to bring awareness of Zoroastrianism to the local community and neighborhood.

These are some of the events planned around the world, if you and the events you are planning have not been included contact [dollydastoor@sympatico.ca](mailto:dollydastoor@sympatico.ca)