



Daughters
of Mashyani



Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress
Houston, Texas

December 28, 2000 - January 1, 2001



Daughters of Mashiyani

Hall of Fame

Preface

Zarathushti history is replete with heroines, but some women stand out. It is time now to show pride in what they have achieved, and appreciate where we are today because of their commitment and zeal. It is hoped that their vision, enthusiasm and accomplishments will inspire future generations.

For the World Zoroastrian Congress 2000, Dolly Dastoor, and Aban Rustomji envisaged a women's event that would include a show depicting fashions through the ages; a workshop with a panel discussion; and a Hall of Fame which would honour those women whose contributions to the arts, business, education, government, and philanthropy have been of greatest value for the development of the Zarathushti community over the past 200 years.

Ideas to come up with a catchy name went back and forth for the Hall of Fame. A very special young friend Farishta Dinshaw told me about the mythical Mashyani. According to the Iranian legend of creation, Mashyani was the first woman on Earth, and from her were born six sets of twins who gave rise to the rest of humankind. She

Dolly Dastoor



10 September, 1939

epitomises all shades of womanhood — innocence and allure, tenacity and fragility, generosity and sentimentality. In legends, she is equal to her male counterpart Mashya with arms on their shoulders, joined to each other, and of the same shape and height. To pay homage to her, we decided to name the women's forum, Daughters of Mashyani.

I was given the task of approaching the global Zarathushti community to seek nominations for women, both historical and contemporary, who have contributed to our community and to our heritage. Of these, twenty were to be selected, and their achievements catalogued in a commemorative book *Daughters of Mashyani*. The criteria for nomination included:

- The value of their contribution to society, to significant groups within society, or to the progress and freedom of women.
- Significant national contribution to art, athletics, business, government, philanthropy, humanities, science or education.
- The enduring value of the achievements.

Seventy-eight nominations were received of exceptional women, three long after the due date — not only of high profile achievers, but ordinary women who in their own quiet way have contributed to society. I would like to put on record here that this is just the beginning. There are many more capable women whom we know of in our minds, but whose names were not nominated for reasons of modesty, disinterest or passivity.

The difficult task of selecting twenty Daughters of Mashyani was given to three women, two from the USA, and one from India, all of them achievers in their own right.

There are several other Daughters of Mashyani whom I would like to thank for their help in making this tribute possible: Tannaz Minwalla for designing the cover with her interpretation of Mashyani and the inner cover, Farishta Dinshaw for compiling the brief histories of our illustrious Zarathushti women, and the three judges for the time and care they spent on the selection.

My special thanks to Dinshaw Tamboly whose generosity in financing the publication of this book is one of his many acts of unflagging community service.

Toxy Cowasjee
Karachi, Pakistan
December, 2000

Foreword

Legend, as narrated by Firdausi in the Shah-Nama, has it that Princess Tehmina, daughter of the king of Samengan, approached the famous Rustom and proposed marriage to him, breaking with tradition by removing her veil to reveal her face to a stranger and marrying a man from the enemy camp. The following pages contain the biographies of other Zarathushti women, who like the Princess Tehmina, broke loose from conventional societal shackles and overcame the many obstacles they were faced with to reach individual zeniths.

Dilshad Manooch



1 March, 1979

The Hall of Fame attempts to enshrine the achievements of these women chosen from a myriad spectrum. Deciding who is to be included in a publication of this sort is always a difficult task and the number could be easily tripled or quadrupled, but the following have been selected for their exceptional contribution to life and Zarathushti identity. Their uniqueness and their work have opened up avenues for other women and in some cases men too.

Zarathushtis have managed to go beyond the glory of yore to remain forerunners in the present day.

Members of our community are at the pinnacle of professions from medicine to music, from law to literature. For a community so small our successes are many and multi-faceted. Yet, through modernity, we have retained a distinct identity, we have adapted to achieve a symbiotic harmony. To our women, can be attributed this nurturing of a sense of pride for our religion, roots and history. And these celebrated women have striven, sought and found, keeping the flame of Zarathushti religion alive, not yielding to the miasma of time.

Although the Zarathushti religion espouses the values of equality, societal circumstances do not. Disabilities, be they cultural, educational or economic, in a society that was and still is predominantly patriarchal hindered women from realising their full potential. Women were to grow up, marry, have children, then grow old and die. To aim beyond home and hearth was unthinkable, terrible things would befall - dishonour to the family name and destruction of the community itself.

The Gathas speak of both men and women in equal capacity and Asho Zarathushtra in a discourse to his daughter Porouchisti, on the occasion of her marriage, speaks of her noble mind, recognising women in their role as thinkers and not merely breeders. The Zarathushti religion, with its emphasis on the individual conscience and personal action, is one that is most conducive to progress in all realms. This liberality has been most manifest in the condition of our women. When one thinks of the subordination, suppression and subjugation of women in an eco-socio-religious context, Zarathushti women tend to be excluded.

As a law student, it gave me great pleasure to learn that Cornelia Sorabji was the first woman to read law at Oxford University and despite being barred from entering the legal profession because of her sex, returned to India to champion the cause of widows and orphans, a pioneer in a struggle that still continues.

At a time when the world of domesticity was intended to be a woman's only world, Lady Bhikaiji Cama devoted her life to furthering the cause of a free India. She was the

first to unfurl the Indian flag in a public gathering and supported underground freedom fighters both financially and intellectually. Her courage and commitment knew no bounds and her spirit in its perpetual fight for truth and justice truly embodied that of Zarathushti religion.

“For the welfare of the world her heart must beat” are the words used in the Gathas to describe a woman’s role. Our community knows no dearth of social workers. It is more often than not, women who have chosen to extend their role as mother in the home to the outside world, looking to the well being of those who are too weak to do so themselves. Mary Clubwalla Jadhav devoted her life to tending to the wretched, poor and hungry but unlike many others chose not to have her work and philanthropy end with her. The Madras School of Social Work is one of her many lasting legacies, thereby allowing for the continued inculcation of philanthropic values.

This book aspires to portray the quintessential woman, through these personalities. Simply themselves, neither women’s women nor the male conceived notion of femininity. But free spirits, those who love life and wish to share it. *Carpe Diem*, seize the day, is the essence of our religion. To learn, to live, to breathe, to be oneself, long before we are food for vultures. It is an offering of an insight and platform to see things differently.

The importance of underlining the achievements of these women in a context separate from that of our men cannot be overemphasised. Our literature and history as a community overwhelmingly focuses on male protagonists, and at the threshold of a new millennium, reflection on the achievements of Zarathushti women is imperative. After all a celebration of our women is a celebration of our religion.

Dilshad Marolia
Brossard, Canada

Daughters of Mashyani inducted to the Hall of Fame

Bai Motlibai Maneckjee Wadia
Jerbai Nusherwanji Wadia
Madame Bhikhaiji Rustam Cama
Lady Hirabai Cowasjee Jehangir
Lady Meherbai Dorabji Tata
Manijeh Kermani Shahrokh
Gool Khurshed Minwalla
Farangis Kaikhosrow Shahrokh
Dr Banoo Jehangir Coyaji
Meher Jamshed Patel
Roda Homi Mistry
Parichehr Namdar Freydooni
Tooran Shahriari Bahrami
Dr Armaity Sapur Desai
Bapsi Sidhwa
Roshan R Rivetna
Dr Mehroo D Hansotia
Dr Dolly Dastoor
Dame Meher Master-Moos
Shireen Khushroo Kiash

Bai Motlibai Maneckjee Wadia

When Motlibai Maneckjee Wadia died on 24 May 1897, for the first time in the history of the Zarathushti community in Mumbai, the Panchayet called a meeting to place on records the loss sustained by the death of a lady.



30 October, 1811 - 24 May, 1897

Motlibai was born on 30 October 1811, the only one of 19 children to survive. She married her cousin Maneckjee at a young age, but was widowed by the time she was 26 years old. She devoted herself to bringing up her two sons Nowrojee and Nusherwanjee, leading a secluded life, rarely leaving her residence. She may have continued to live like this, ultimately passing into obscurity, if the death of her father when she was 31 had not forced her to take up the reigns of the family estate.

Motlibai had only rudimentary education but she proved to be a natural at business, her inherent thrift, sterling good sense and simplicity working to the advantage of the business. In 1863, after her two sons attained majority, she sent them to Europe to explore possibilities of expanding the Wadia empire

overseas. Her business acumen was responsible for saving their company losses during the critical period between 1864-1865 when “Share Mania” caused many large local businesses to collapse.

She was a deeply religious woman and during her lifetime she set aside money for the performance of Baj-Rojgar and other ceremonies. She gave large sums for the maintenance of several Daremehers, including the Vadi Daremeher at Navsari, and built one in the Fort area in memory of her father Jehangir Nusserwanjee Wadia. In 1894, she rebuilt the Udvada Atash Behram and set aside a sum for the future upkeep of the building. The road from the Udvada railway station, a distance of over three miles, was constructed at her expense and she deposited money with the Government to be used for its repairs. Other charitable concerns that she established include a dispensary at Mahim, and the Bai Motlibai Obstetric Hospital. She gave land and money to the J N Petit Parsee Boys’ Orphanage, donated generously towards relief of the citizens of Surat afflicted by fire, and contributed to the Parsi Panchayet Funds.

Although many of her public donations can be accounted for, her private acts of charity remain incalculable. She discreetly supported many indigent families by paying their household expenses such as rent and servants’ wages.

One of Motlibai’s dreams was to personally gift a fine collection of old coins to Queen Victoria, but she was unable to fulfill it. After her death, her son Nowrojee did so on her behalf.

Jerbai Nusherwanji Wadia

Few individuals have left a legacy like Jerbai Nusherwanji Wadia. As a result of her vision, business acumen and philanthropy, today thousands of Zarathushtis in Mumbai have a roof over their heads. She was the pioneer of low-cost housing complexes or Baugs that are an intrinsic part of Zarathushti life in Mumbai.



1852 - 8 March, 1926

Jerbai did not have any formal schooling, but she was literate in both Gujarati and English as a result of an arrangement made by her maternal uncle Rustomji Jamshetji Jeejeebhai. Although she was raised in, and married into, an affluent family, Jerbai was drawn to the plight of the poor Zarathushtis in Gujerat. In the early 1900s, to many impoverished Zarathushtis eking out meagre incomes in Gujerati villages, Mumbai was like Dick Whittington's London — a dream city with streets paved with gold where they could make their fortune. Also, in Gujerat there were no major universities, and the medium of instructions in local schools and colleges being Gujerati, the graduates had difficulty in finding jobs in banks and companies that required English. However,

without the guaranteed security of low-cost housing available, few families were ready to venture out.

In 1907, when Jerbai inherited Rs.900,000 from her husband Naoroji, she decided to use it to build homes for these aspiring immigrants from Gujerat. She arranged for land to be purchased at Lalbaug, and personally supervised the design and building of eight apartment blocks named Naoroji Baug in memory of her husband. She ensured that the architectural blueprint incorporated, among other Zarathushti domestic requirements, a *chulaa waati* (hearth) in every kitchen. In the days before gas stoves and electric fires, it was the duty of every Zarathushti household to maintain a continuous fire. Jerbai also took responsibility for allotting the apartments and fixing the rents. In many cases, she waived the rent till the tenants found their financial feet. This Baug later grew into a colony of 32 apartment blocks.

In 1917, Jerbai established the Naoroji Nusherwanji Wadia Building Trust Fund. Jerbai was the driving force behind the building of Rustom Baug, in memory of her youngest son who died in 1923, as well as Jer Baug. Her other sons Cusrow and Ness continued her mission and built Cusrow Baug, and Ness Baug. Other philanthropic industrialists followed her example in other major cities of the Subcontinent, and later in Iran and in the British Colonies.

One of Jerbai's priorities was providing adequate health care to Zarathushti women whose chances of succumbing to tuberculosis or childbirth complications were uncommonly high. She donated generously to help build extensions of several clinics and hospitals, including the Khandala Charitable Clinic, Dr Rustom Billimoria TB

Sanatorium, Dr Tehmulji Narimanwalla Obstetrics Hospital, Parsi General Hospital, Jehangir Marzban Convalescent Home and Bandra Shirinbai Cama Convalescent Home. After her death, her sons built the Bai Jerbai Wadia Hospital for Children in her memory.

All told, apart from contributions from her inherited wealth, Jerbai's donations from her personal income exceeded Rs 80 million (approximately US\$18 million today), a phenomenal sum in any age.

Madame Bhikhaiji Rustam Cama

Bhikhaiji Rustom Cama was one of the outstanding Indian revolutionaries in Europe, who came to be known as the High Priestess of Indian nationalism. Her portrait appeared in French newspapers along with Joan of Arc.

Bhikhaiji was educated at the Alexandra Native Girl's English Institution. Her marriage was arranged with Rustam Cama, the son of renowned Oriental scholar, Kharshedji Cama, in 1885. Not being content in her household role, she used to say that she was also wedded 'to the uplift of my countrymen, both social and political'.



24 September, 1861 - 12 August,
1936

Enthusiastically following the proceedings of the first session of the Indian National Congress, Bhikhaiji later grasped its importance and opportunity. When the plague epidemic broke out in Mumbai in 1896, she committed herself to the task of nursing the sick and dying. Her involvement with the plague victims and her cognizance of the suffering caused by famine and economic depression made a deep and lasting impression on her psyche. She became involved in politics and determined to fight to liberate India from foreign rule.

Due to health problems Bhikhaiji went to England in 1902 for an operation and medical treatment. During her stay abroad, from 1902 to 1907, she underwent a dramatic advance in her political activism, earning the name 'Mother of the Revolution'. She started her political work in England under the guidance of the Grand Old Man of India, Dadabhai Naoroji. She campaigned for Dadabhai's election to the British House of Commons, and met many eminent Indians involved in India's freedom struggle.

Bhikhaiji was associated with the Indian Home Rule Society founded in 1905 by Shyamji Krishna Varma, with the objective of securing home rule for India and carrying out propaganda for that in England. She also wrote articles for a monthly newsletter, *The Indian Sociologist*, published by Varma, which was critical of the moderates in the Indian National Congress. When Savarkar completed his epic, *The First Indian War of Independence - 1857*, in Marathi, Bhikhaiji was involved in publishing this book, and with the help of M T Acharya, translated it into French.

Bhikhaiji's hour of glory was at the Second International Socialist Congress at Stuttgart, Germany on August 22, 1907, attended by nearly 1000 delegates from different countries. Making a mark in history, she made a brilliant speech, conveying the greetings of the Indian people who were suffering at the hands of the British, and unfurled the first flag of independent India. She said, "This flag is of India's independence. Behold, it is born. It is already sanctified by the blood of martyred Indian youth. I call upon you, gentlemen, to rise and salute the flag of Indian independence. In the name of this flag I appeal to lovers of freedom all over the world to cooperate with this flag in freeing one-fifth of the human race".

In her speech before unfurling the flag, she described the deteriorating economic condition of India, which was suffering from the devastation of famine. She gave a strong appeal for justice, human rights and independence of the Indian people. For

this act of sedition, she was exiled and deprived of income by the British government, and had to live for 33 years in England and France, until she was physically handicapped by a paralytic stroke. In November 1935, Sir Cowasjee Jehangir brought her back to India where she died on August 12, 1936. She donated her personal assets to the Avabai Petit Orphanage for girls, and Rs. 54,000 to the Framji Nusserwanjee Patel Agiary at Mazgaon, where a ceremony is performed every year in her memory.

Lady Hirabai Cowasjee Jehangir

Lady Hirabai Cowasjee Jehangir was a descendent of Seth Hormusji Wadia who started the Bombay Parsi Panchayet Funds and Properties in 1823, and she continued the family connection when she served as a Trustee for close to thirty years. She became a Trustee in 1946, after she was elected uncontested to take over from Lady Navajbai Ratan Tata, the first lady to become a Trustee in 1935. In 1974, Hirabai became the first woman to Chair the Panchayet.



22 August, 1893 - 9 June, 1976

Born into the affluent and illustrious Wadia family, famous as master builders of battleships, Hirabai grew up in the lap of luxury. Her marriage to Cowasjee Jehangir, scion of the rich Readymoney family, only added to her charmed life. She could have whiled away her time in leisurely pursuits with great ease as in those days women of her social class were not expected to be more than decorative and docile accessories. Hirabai chose instead to do something for the betterment of the community, working not only for the welfare of Zarathushtis but also underprivileged Gujeratis

and Maharashtrians. She set up a team of dedicated assistants who worked to improve the conditions of widows of World War II heroes, and she served as Chairperson on several committees looking after housing, education and health. She was also often called upon for advice in domestic disputes!

As a Trustee of the Panchayet she appointed committees who would visit the different Panchayet housing colonies to see that the housing, monetary and social conditions of the residents were being met. She started Nursery Schools in the colonies, and paid special attention to the housing needs of young engaged couples who could not get married because they had nowhere to stay. Besides her devotion to community service, Hirabai was a shrewd and efficient entrepreneur. When she took over the Godrej Printing Press, it was running at a loss, but she soon turned it into a profitable venture. To encourage young Zarathushtis looking for careers in printing, she started a scheme of giving substantial stipends to them.

Hirabai's belief that education was the way to a better life was the motivation behind her establishing the Wadia-Vatcha School at Dadar, Mumbai and the Sir Cowasjee Jehangir School at Tardeo, Mumbai. She also founded high schools in Gandevi and Navsari. She set up the Sir Cowasjee Jehangirji Rural Boys' Home and the Jehangirji Rural Girls' Home as well. She promoted both arts and sciences and she put her heart into setting up the Sir Cowasjee Jehangirji Institute of Science and the Jehangir Art Gallery, leaving behind an enduring legacy for the people of Mumbai.

Lady Meherbai Dorabji Tata

Lady Meherbai Tata's tombstone reads:

“The reason firm, the temperate will
Endurance, foresight, strength and skill
A perfect woman, nobly planned
To warn, to comfort and command”

This aptly sums up her character, her vision and her contribution to her country. Even as a young girl studying at the Bishop Cotton School in Bangalore she showed her will and her pride in being a Zarathushti. She insisted on spelling her name Mehri instead of Mary, contrary to the wishes of her father Hormusji Bhabha who was greatly affected by his British education. Even when she played tennis in tournaments in India and Europe, she never forgot her heritage and insisted on wearing a sari on the courts.



10 October, 1899 - 18 June, 1931

A liberal man, Hormusji Bhabha considerably influenced his daughter's vision of life, particularly her views on women's rights, and their role in politics and government. According to Mehri, the two greatest needs in India were the need to familiarise men with the idea that women too could achieve whatever they set their aim to; and the

need to educate both men and women in how to bring up children with sound character.

She married Dorab Tata, eldest son of the illustrious Jamshedji Tata, when she was 18. Dorab was twenty years older than her, but their common enthusiasm for sports and their “almost complete identity of outlook and interests in life” proved to be the foundation of thirty-three years of marital accord. She used her position in society to better the lot of the less privileged. Her active work to collect donations during World War I earned her a CBE (Commander of the Order of the Empire). Her spacious and splendid house was used on different occasions as the venue for fundraising events for the Bombay Presidency Women’s Council Rescue Home for Indian women. During the Bombay riots in 1929, the Women’s Council sold food at cost price to residents of Byculla who were facing shortage of provisions. The money raised was donated to Red Cross and hospitals and to the families of soldiers and sepoys posted in the disturbed areas. Her house also served as the headquarters of the reception committee, which she chaired, to look after the hospitality of the delegates of the All India Women’s Conference. She was a champion for the betterment of conditions for unskilled Indian labour that was indentured in the British colonies to build railroads and highways.

At the age of 51, Mehri Tata lost a valiant fight against leukemia, and her ashes were interred in a cemetery at Brookwood. Before Sir Dorab died a year later, he initiated The Lady Tata Memorial Trust for research in leukemia. The Meherbai D Tata Education Trust (partly from public donations) also continues her wish for women’s upliftment by training women in areas of hygiene, health, and social welfare. Mehri Tata may no longer be alive, but her legacy lives on.

M anijeh Kermani Shahrokh

Manijeh Kermani Shahrokh's name may not be as well known as Mary Wollstonecraft or Marie Stopes, but in her own right she was one of the driving forces of the women's movement for equality. She was the first Zarathushti woman to participate in the regular meetings of the Zoroastrian Anjuman of Tehran, and through her vision and foresight she initiated the involvement of women in all aspects of Iranian Zarathushti social life. One of her first initiatives was to lobby for, and to secure Zarathushti women's right to vote.



17 September, 1900 - 22 January, 1984

She was born in Mumbai at the turn of the twentieth century, but grew up in Shanghai, China where her father Arbab Rostom Kermani was a successful businessman trading in silk and tea. She finished her elementary and high school education in British schools in Shanghai, and was fluent in English and French. Her talent in music was unmatched, and she reached the "Virtuoso" classification for classical violin at an early age. At the age of twelve, she was selected to perform as a violin soloist at one of the largest concerts in Shanghai, and her mastery moved the Mayor of Shanghai to present her a special award.

At the age of 18, she married Aflatoon Keikhosrow Shahrokh and moved to Iran. After a cosmopolitan life in Shanghai, she found the conservative society where a woman's place was supposed to be her home difficult to adjust to. She was particularly dismayed at the injustice to women in villages, and realised that the root cause of this was lack of education.

She decided to start with the Zarathushti community and approached the Anjuman for permission to teach sports to young girls. This was more of a problem than is apparent to our twenty-first century perspective. At that time, there was no high school for Zarathushtis in Iran. Even boys could only study till the sixth grade. As historical documents show, this was the first time in recent Iranian history that a woman was allowed to teach girls, and teaching sports to girls was unheard of. After the initial success of her classes, she approached the Anjuman to let her teach sewing and quilting, and English.

Manijeh Sharokh's next project was to set up a girls' school, and she organised a play to raise funds. Although some men boycotted the play, Manijeh and her team of other progressive minded women raised enough money to start one class. Subsequent classes were added on in the following years. A few years later, with the help of the Anjuman, more junior schools were set up and she was asked to be a special envoy in charge of them. In 1940, Manijeh Shahrokh started the Zoroastrian Women Association to promote the welfare of the Iranian community in general and Zarathushti women in particular. Over the years it has maintained its apolitical stance and worked only for the betterment of the Iranian community. In 1996, the United Nations bestowed ZWO special recognition as "Accredited member of the United Nations for the advancement of humanity."

In an era when women were neither seen nor heard, and years before Raza Shah Pahlavi ordered the removal of the veil, Manijeh Shahrokh adopted the *sari* instead of the all encompassing *chadar* (shawl) as a personal statement that women should be free from imposed standards of modesty. The fact that in spite of this she inspired respect in all those she worked with is testimony to her charisma and leadership qualities.

Gool Khurshed Minwalla

Gool Minwalla's achievements are remarkable on their own; they are extraordinary when one considers that she is a minority within a minority in an Islamic state – she is a Zarathushti woman in an environment where women are only just beginning to stand up for themselves. Gool has devoted her whole life to changing the social landscape of Pakistan.

Gool Minwalla



1 May, 1913

She was fortunate to have trained under Dr Maria Montessori herself at a course in Adyar, in 1939. As a pioneer of the Montessori movement in Pakistan, she was one of the founding members of the Pakistan Montessori Association in 1949. Since 1965, Gool has been the guiding light behind the Montessori Teachers Training Courses and she is one of the few Montessori Trainers in the world qualified to examine the student teachers. Her efforts have not just revolutionised education for children, but have also provided countless women with the ability to earn an independent living. To many, this is the single most important achievement of her life.

Her concern for the uplift of women has been the underlying thread in her social work. The All

Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) of which she has been a member since the early 50s has done much to highlight the plight of women, and Gool has been at the forefront of the movement.

Her contribution to society goes far beyond the endeavours for women. An enthusiastic proponent of peace and unity, she was a disciple of the late Jamshed Nusserwanjee, and has been the guiding light for the Theosophical Society in Pakistan for almost 50 years. Under the aegis of the Society, she has contributed to education, social welfare, and collected funds for various United Nations bodies.

Her social welfare activities encompass organizations such as The Poor Patient's Relief Society, The Poor Families Welfare Society, the Ida Rieu Poor Welfare Association with its school for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind. With her guidance these organisations have become an integral part of the social welfare system in Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan recognised her commitment to social welfare as early as 1958, awarding her the *Tamgha-e-Quaid-e-Azam* for her contribution to the upliftment of society. She is the first Zarathushti woman to receive this award.

From fundraising to hands-on care, Gool has always given selflessly and unstintingly. As part of her lifelong dedication to education she has served as the government nominee on the boards of the Karachi University and the Boards of Secondary Education. She was instrumental in getting Gujarati textbooks published for schools in Pakistan.

The government has repeatedly shown its confidence in and respect for her abilities. She was nominated as the first Chairman of the National Council of Social Welfare, a member of the governing body of the Pakistan Red Cross Society and the Pakistan Leprosy Association. She has served on the United Nations Commission on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders on behalf of the government of Pakistan.

Farangis Kaikhosrow Shahrokh

F. K. Shahrokh



11 May, 1916

Farangis Shahrokh is one of few dynamic individuals who have altered the lives of not just individuals but whole communities wherever they have worked and lived. She has travelled extensively, visiting over 25 countries, and in her retirement she is working on her Memoirs. Considering her list of achievements the book will no doubt serve the dual purpose of being a historical record and an absorbing read.

She was born in Tehran and completed her elementary studies at Iradj, and higher studies at American Junior Sage College, Tehran. She moved to Hamadan after she married Ardeshir Yeganegi in 1933. Here she worked hard to establish a clinic, a nursery school and an orphanage. In this task, she was supported by her husband, leading women of Hamadan as well as the Mayor. Farangis worked relentlessly to give a voice to the women of Iran. She lobbied for welfare of women in prison and formed a supervisory body to ensure that they were not ill-treated. She participated in the formation of the Zoroastrian Women's Association, by no means an easy task in a country where it was difficult to establish an association with the word "women" in its title.

She immersed herself in studies after her husband's death in 1953, obtaining a degree in Literature from Tehran University. Four years later she left for the USA where she studied Social Work and Occupational Therapy from the University of Southern California. On her return to Iran, she went back to fighting for the protection of women's rights. She served as Director Training and Employment of Women's Organisations of Iran, co-ordinating training workshops for women in small towns. Training included literacy, typing, driving, and use of electrical household tools.

She also became involved in promoting the heritage and culture of Iran. In conjunction with Ali Mansoor, the Prime Minister of Iran at that time, Dr Farang Mehr and Mr Zoka, she laid the foundation of Anjoman-e-Iran-e-Bastan (The Ancient Iranian Anjuman). Activities included introduction to ancient Iranian civilisation through talks, conferences, publications and television. She wrote a book *In Search of Truth*, a history book on Iranian Zarathushtis after the fall of the Sassanian Empire in the 7th century.

In 1964, by the order of Empress Farahdiba, she founded the Sazeman-e-Sanaye-Daste-Irani (The Iranian Handicraft Organisation). She spent the next seven years on getting it off and running, and till today it is one of the most profitable organisations in Iran. She set up 32 co-operatives for technical training of member craftspersons for improvement of quality and better marketing of Iranian handicrafts. Over 150,000 artisans are members of this organisation. As a result of Farangis's efforts, Iran's export of their handicrafts is second only to their oil export. Its success motivated the United Nations to assign her to Jamaica where she collected Jamaican artefacts and set up small industries. Farangis was awarded several medals for her service in the development of Iran particularly the advancement of Iranian Industries. She later wrote two books on the Cottage Industries of Iran with particular reference to handicrafts. Farangis also worked with farmers to train and help them do other things during the off-season. She also lectured on Cottage Industry of Iran at the faculty of

Farmer Youths. Farangis donated 25,000 sq metres of land to the Ministry of Education for a compound of the Occupational Center in Iran.

In the mid 70s she immigrated to the USA, where once again she took active part in the affairs of her new home. She does volunteer work for several organisations including Orange County Sexual Assault Committee and the libraries in Orange County high schools. For the development of the Zarathushti community in California, she founded the California Zoroastrian Center, and with her customary zeal she served as its President for a decade. She donated the library building and books for public use to the California Zoroastrian Center. At the Eleventh FEZANA Congress held in New York in 1998 Farangis was presented the award for the most prominent and outstanding individual of the year.

D r Banoo Jehangir Coyaji

Dr Banoo Coyaji is less than five feet tall, but in stature she is a giant. Recipient of India's highest civilian awards the Padma Bhushan (1989) and the Punya Bhushan (1991) for her work in reproductive health, she received international recognition when she was presented the Ramon Magsaysay Award, the Asian equivalent of the Nobel Prize, in 1993. In 1992/93 she also received the Rameshwardas Birla National Award for research, which included a grant to continue her work in childcare and family planning.



22 August, 1918

From the beginning Banoo was unique in her achievements. She has the distinction of being the first girl to Matriculate from St Vincent's, an all-boys' school! She simultaneously appeared for her Senior Cambridge exams from Convent of Jesus and Mary. She went on to become a doctor and started working with her husband's brother at his Coyaji Davakhana (dispensary). She still runs it with the assistance of the next two generations of Coyajis.

In 1944, she started her career as a gynaecologist and obstetrician at Pune's King Edward's Memorial Hospital, performing caesarians by standing on a stool because of her diminutive height! She was instrumental in transforming KEM Hospital from a

single floor, barrack-like, 40-bed hospital into a modern 550-bed Medical Research Institute and teaching hospital affiliated with B J Medical College. She is its Chief Medical Officer and Managing Director.

In 1972, Banoo established a primary health unit at Vadu, a village 40 km from Pune. This small venture has today grown into Shirdi Saibaba Rural Hospital that serves the medical need of many outlying villages. Based on its success she launched a community health scheme in 1977. She has a team of 600 local girls trained in nutrition, hygiene, sanitation and family planning who visit rural communities offering training and medical relief. The Indian government is planning to use the Vadu programme as a model for implementation throughout the country. In fact, her programme of how a city-based hospital can facilitate medical support to the rural community is being replicated in other developing countries as well.

Banoo has used her experience in Pune to push for quality community health care at both national and international levels. She has held several influential advisory posts including Consultant and Advisor to the Federal Government for Family Planning and Population Control; member of the Indian Council of Medical Research; member of Pune University's Senate. She has worked with World Health Organisation, Geneva; World Bank; Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and United Nations Family Planning Association.

Besides her passion for medicine, Banoo inherited a love of words from her father Pestonjee Pheroreshaw Kapadia who wrote under the pseudonym Hairat. She has been involved with Pune's *Daily News* since 1956, and ran a Marathi publication *Shakal* for more than thirty years. She took special tuition in Marathi to become fluent in the language. In 1994, S N D T University and Pune University conferred honorary D Litt degrees on her.

M_eher Jamshed Patel

M. J. Patel.



14 March, 1919 - 10 July, 1989

Mahbanu Pestonji Dubash, later to become Meher Jamshed Patel, won her first tennis trophy at the age of seven. From then onwards, accompanied by her parents and cheered by her classmates from the Mama Parsi Girls' Secondary School, "Baby" Dubash played tennis with a passion, winning her first major tournament at the age of nine, and becoming an All-India tennis champion at the age of 13. From 1933 to 1940 she blazed a trail of victories on the Indian tennis circuit in singles, doubles and mixed-doubles. During their centenary celebrations in 1986, the Karachi Gymkhana, site of the Sindh Open Tennis Championships recognised and honoured Meher Patel's outstanding contribution to the world of tennis in the Subcontinent with a plaque reading "Sportswoman of the Century". Even today her record of victories remains unsurpassed.

World War II brought her tennis career to a halt, but undaunted she switched gears and Meher, as she began to be known, became a Red Cross volunteer and a youth leader. For her work with the Girl Guides, Meher received a medal and citation from Buckingham Palace on the occasion of Her Majesty's coronation in 1953. She was a founder member and active promoter of the

Karachi Parsi Youth Conference, the forerunner of today's Pakistan Parsi Collegiate Association. Under the guidance of Jamshed Nusserwanji Mehta, the first Mayor of Karachi, she became involved in social service, and was the moving spirit of the Youth Lodge of the Karachi Theosophical Society. This spirit of service to the underprivileged was to be her lifelong contribution to the community. She was involved on many committees which sought to provide employment and financial aid to the poor and infirm, including the Family Welfare Cooperative Society; Poor Families Welfare Society; the British Women's Association's Servants' Bureau.

As a young girl, Meher Patel studied Zarathushti religion under the tutelage of Dastur Dr Manekji Dhalla and for the rest of her life, was a student of comparative religion, ardently pursuing knowledge of the Divine. Realising that many Zarathushti children were unaware of the fundamentals of their religion, Meher Patel started Religious Classes for Zoroastrian Children in 1963. She not only taught prayers, history, Gujarati and songs but also organised a van service in areas where transportation posed a problem. To interest the older teens, she organised panel discussions, the future of Zarathushti youth. Later, she became a founder member of the Informal Religious Meetings (IRM) which continues to provide the community with a steady source of philosophical and religious knowledge. In recognition of her contribution, in 1990 IRM instituted the Meher J Patel Award for Zarathushti schoolchildren. Each year they organise a competition reflecting Meher Patel's varied interests, such as elocution, drama, flower arrangement, essay writing.

In January 1971, Meher Patel began to spontaneously write messages she received during meditation. A collection of these messages containing spiritual guidance was published in a book *Reveal Thy Grace*.

Roda Homi Mistry

Roda Mistry



16 October, 1928

Roda Mistry's multi-faceted achievements are reflected in some of the positions she has held —Member of the Rajya Sabha (National Assembly) from Hyderabad (1980 -1986); Chairperson, Andhra Pradesh Travel and Tourism Development Corporation; Chairperson, Andhra Pradesh National Children's Fund; and President Emeritus of the Indian Council of Social Welfare.

Educated in the twin cities of Hyderabad-Secunderabad, she was greatly influenced by the late Janab Mehndi Nawab Jung, former Governor of Gujerat, whose spirit of community service development propelled her into social work. In 1955, she became a member of the Indian Council of Social Welfare, Andhra Pradesh. Two years later, she was appointed as the Chairperson of Aram Ghar, a home for the disabled and those with chronic diseases, and was instrumental in upgrading the care of its residents.

In 1959, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru allotted her a Congress ticket and she became a member of the

Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly. Over the next twenty years she rose steadily up the political ladder, before becoming the first Zarithushti to be elected to the Rajya Sabha in 1980. In the years serving the state government of Andhra Pradesh, she initiated several social welfare programmes that established her reputation for plain speaking and active involvement. As a result of her efforts, the Mid-day Meal Programme to serve nutritious lunches in school was started in 1963. She was primarily responsible for setting up Legal Cells in all Pradesh Congress Committees to rescue women forced into bonded labour, prostitution and acting as beasts of burden. She formed the first All Women Cooperative Society for Employment of Displaced Women. In 1975, the International Year for Women, she established the First All Women Trupti Cooperative Supermarket in Secunderabad.

Her most significant contribution in the field of social work in India is the founding of the School of Social Work in 1966, which offered a graduate course in Social Work. In 1972, after receiving recognition from Osmania University it was upgraded to College level. As a result of her constant effort, in 1992 the College was recognised as a Centre for Advance Research in Social Work and provides facilities for doctoral research programmes in social work.

As a member of the Board of Directors of India Tourism Development Corporation, she has been in the forefront for promoting museums, public libraries, and public gardens. On a number of occasions, Roda Mistry has represented India at international conferences and meetings, including a seminar in Jerusalem, Israel where her plea for a more humane approach to inter-country adoption was accepted.

Parichehr Namdar Freydooni

Parichehr Namdar Freydooni is the first Zarathushti artist to have won the *Cavelier Delle Arti* (Badge of Cavalier of Art), Italy in 1985, and to have her biography included in the World Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Artists. Her biography has also been published in the 1984 edition of *Folk and Progressive Art — Ancient and New Values in Contemporary Art*, published by Academia Italy.

پریچهر نامدار فریدونی



8 May 1930

Parichehr after completing her high school education at Anoushiravan Dadgar school (Zoroastrian school) in Tehran, joined the School of Arts, Tehran University, where she studied painting and received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1954, and she took part in her first group exhibition the Meher-e-Gan Club a year later. At that time she was also teaching Graphic Arts at a cartography organisation, and the logo she designed for them put them on the map!

Parichehr is the creator of a new technique in impressionist oil painting which reflects movement. Her first solo exhibition was in 1975 at the Khaneh Aftab Gallery, Tehran, where her painting called 'Afringani' attracted a lot of

attention because of its unique quality. 'Afringani' shows the movement of the burning flame when viewed from different angles. To date no artist has ever produced a painting in relief that would reflect movement.

There has been no looking back after that. She has exhibited her paintings in Binial, Switzerland; Vichy, France; London, UK; several cities in California, USA and Italy. The Italians have conferred numerous awards on her, including the Certificate of Merit International Confederation of the Order Artiste (1984), a gold medal and the European Banner of Arts from the L'Academia D'Europa (1984), and the Premio Milano 1988 from the Istituto D'Arte Contemporanea Di Milano. In 1985, the Academia Italy honoured her with the plaque of Premio D'Italia in 24 carat gold, the Golden Flame award and the Oscar D'Italia, and in 1988 they awarded her The Centauro D'Oro.

Parichehr's unique style of painting has made her one of the leading contemporary artists, and she has been invited the world over to give talks about her inspiration and techniques to students, fellow artists and art lovers. She has been interviewed several times on Iranian TV, and has also appeared on Farsi programmes *Didar* and *Iran-va-Jahan* on Californian television channels.

In 1999, Parichehr took part in a group exhibition entitled World Contemporary Art 1999 at the Celebrity Center International, California, and was presented The Best of the Show Award as well as a Lifetime Achievement Award. Parichehr's interest in art has led her in many directions, from designing logos to making maps to becoming a world renowned painter, but interestingly one of her most enduring legacies is that she designed the outfit Iranian Zarathushti mobeds (priests) wear for religious ceremonies.

Tooran Shahriari Bahrami

Law and poetry seem an unlikely combination, yet Tooran Shahriari Bahrami has made a mark both as a lawyer and a poet. After obtaining her BA in Law from the Tehran University in 1955, Tooran became a Legal Advisor to the Ministry of Labour, Tehran, Iran on issues related to working women and children. When she qualified the Bar in 1963, she became the only Zarathushti woman to practice law at that time. As a matter of fact, she became one of the few *Iranian* women lawyers of that time. Besides practicing law, she took up the post of Chief Labour Specialist and Arbitrator, Ministry of Labour, Tehran, Iran.



3 November 1931

The Iranian revolution in 1979 forced her to give up her practice as women were banned from practicing law. Having an inherent love for literature and poetry, she turned from law to verse. Her first collection of poetry in Farsi, *Gohar* was printed in 1966 and named after her mother. In 1973 on the occasion of the 2500th anniversary celebration of Persian monarchy, she won a special award for her commemorative poems about Kurush (Cyrus the Great). In the same year, she also wrote a historical portrait of women's dress in Iran entitled *Negar-e-Zan*.

Another historical personality that Tooran has immortalized in verse is the first woman Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi. Her son Rajiv Gandhi specially acknowledged the tribute and the poem was later published in a book by the Iranian Embassy in India.

Many of her poems have been printed in Iranian journals like *Sefid-o-Siah*, *Etelaat*, *Banovan*, *Zan-e-Rooz*, *Mehr*, as well as international publications including *Kooros-e-Bozorg* (USA) and *Peyvand* (Tajikistan). Tooran has the added distinction that several of her poems have been set to music as anthems of national events. Some of the more popular anthems include *Kerman* by the Kerman Cultural Association, *Ahura* by the Zoroastrian Student Association, and a special poem rejoicing the victory of the Iranian Soccer team in the World Cup Qualifying Championship on behalf of the Iranian Ministry of Culture.

In recognition for her contribution to Iranian literature, in 1999 the Center for Women's Partnership and Participation, Tehran, Iran, under the auspices of the Office of the President of Iran, selected Tooran as one of the sixty outstanding women of Iran.

Tooran has represented Iran at several national and international events including the First Persian Cultural Festival held in Sydney, Australia in 1994. The Festival was organised by the Iran Foundation of Australia to showcase the rich heritage of Iran. She was invited to the fourth gathering of Tajikis from around the world at the Unity Palace in Dushanbe in 1999. This event celebrated Tajikistan's independence as well as 1100 years' reign of the Samanian Dynasty. Tooran was officially selected to accompany the President of Tajikistan to the auditorium as part of his entourage. In the time allocated to the speakers, Tooran recited two poems, which received

tremendous applause from the audience. Later, BBC and other radio and television stations interviewed her.

Tooran takes an active part in the Zarathushti community and has served on the Tehran Anjuman as well as the Zoroastrian Women's Association of Iran. She writes regularly for Zarathushti journals in Iran and USA such as *Hukht*, *Fravahar*, *Cheesta*, *Vohuman*, *Peyk-e-Mehr*, *Mahnameh* and *Asha*.

D^r Armaity Sapur Desai

Armaity Desai is one of the moving forces behind Social Work Education in India.

In recognition of her outstanding contribution to social work education, in 1992 the International Association of Schools of Social Work, USA conferred the Katherine Kendall Distinguished Service Award on Armaity.



28 April, 1934

Armaity started out as a Lecturer at the Nirmala Niketan College of Social Sciences in 1957, and rose to being the Principal of the College. In 1982, she took over as director of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, the pioneer school of social work in Asia. The World Bank and the International Labour Organisation have offered her several projects, and the strategies she has developed have served as models for education and practice in other countries as well. In 1992, she served as the President of the Association of Indian Universities, and has been a member of the Council of the Association of Commonwealth Universities. In these capacities she has advanced the cause of professional Social Work Education through her interpretation of its value in nation building.

Over the years Armaity has worn a number of hats. She has been a teacher, a writer, a curriculum specialist, a keynote speaker at countless seminars and conventions, and a consultant to governmental and non-governmental organisations. Over 45 of her papers on the subject of Social Work Education have been published in Indian and foreign journals. She has been associated with various educational bodies at both national and international levels. She was the founder and President of the Asian and Pacific Association for Social Work Education; Vice-president of the International Schools of Social Work and the Convener of the UGC Review Committee for Social Work Education in India. She has worked as a consultant on many projects for the United Nations, including the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

The Zarathushti community of India has recognised her contribution to the nation and in 1992 The Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India presented her with the Shiavax Nargolwala Memorial Award for Social and Community Service.

Bapsi Sidhwa

Bapsi Sidhwa



11 August, 1938

Bapsi Sidhwa is the first Zarathushti woman to achieve worldwide success as an English novelist. Her much talked about novel *Ice-Candy Man* (also published as *Cracking India*) was chosen as the Most Notable Book of 1991 by the New York Times as well as the American Library Association. The film *Earth* based on the novel was released in 1999 to both critical acclaim and box office success. It was India's official entry for the 1999 Academy Awards for the Best Foreign Film, and was also included in President Bill Clinton's briefing kit before his tour of India and Pakistan in March 2000.

Born in Karachi, she spent most of her life in Lahore and this has influenced the locales in her books. She contracted polio as a child, and as a result did not go to school. Instead she was tutored at home, and this gave her plenty of time to read, sometimes as much as fifteen hours a day. She graduated from Kinnaird College, Lahore and then left for Mumbai when she married at the age of nineteen. She returned to Lahore after the death of her first husband, and subsequently remarried in Lahore.

Her love of reading nudged her towards writing. Pakistani publishers rejected Bapsi's initial

manuscript as they did not see a local market for English novels. So she not only published it through her own means, but did rounds of bookshops to negotiate distribution and sales. Although she wrote *The Bride* first, her first novel to be published in 1978 was *The Crow Eaters*, a bawdy rollicking tale about a Parsi family. The Junglewala family was revived in her fourth novel *The American Brat* (1994). However, it was her third novel *Ice-Candy Man* (1991) a story of the Partition of India seen through the eyes of a young Parsi girl that brought her widespread recognition and numerous awards, including a Sitara-e-Imtiaz by the Pakistani Government. Other awards conferred on her were the Pakistan Academy of Letters Award; the Patras Bokhari Award, Pakistan; the Literature Prize, Germany and the Lila Wallace Readers' Digest Award. Her novels have been translated in Urdu, French, Russian and German. The Oxford University Press, Pakistan is planning to publish an omnibus edition of her novels, a testimony that Bapsi has come a long way from the days when she was told that there were not enough readers for local English novels! She is currently writing a collection of short stories and essays.

Bapsi held the Bunting Fellowship at Radcliffe/Havard in 1986 and was a visiting scholar at the Rockefeller Foundation Center, Bellagio, Italy in 1991. In the USA, she has taught creative writing and English at Columbia University, University of Houston and Mount Holyoke College. She is the Fanny Hurst writer-in-residence at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, and currently serves on the Board of Imprint, a Houston based organisation to support writers.

Roshan R Rivetna

Roshan Rivetna



2 May, 1939

The very name of the FEZANA Journal brings Roshan Rivetna to mind. Roshan is the prime architect behind the rise of the quarterly FEZANA Journal from a fledgling publication in 1991 to the professional journal widely read throughout the Zarathushti world. Through her dynamic leadership she has woven an editorial team that informs readers of the news and views of the geographically sprawled Zarathushti community. She has encouraged Zarathushti businesses to advertise in the Journal and has often allocated space free of charge to help needy people/ organisations raise funds. One of the projects dear to her heart is the Zarathushti Matrimonial column in the Journal.

Along with her husband Rohinton, with whom she shared the Outstanding Zoroastrian Award at the Seventh North American Zoroastrian Congress, Houston, 1990, Roshan has been heavily involved with establishing a unified infrastructure for the Zarathushti community in North America. She was among the core group that formed the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicagao (ZAC), and she was a driving force behind the establishment of

the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Meher. Since 1985 Roshan has tirelessly supported Rohinton in founding and developing the structure and constitution of FEZANA (Federation of North American Zoroastrian Associations), and nurturing it through its early years. She was awarded a plaque at the Ninth North American Zoroastrian Congress in 1994, "... in recognition for her significant contribution to the establishment of FEZANA infrastructure by the Zarathushtis of Canada and the United States of America."

Roshan has participated actively in Zarathushti congresses in North America, India and Iran; Avesta and Gatha conferences in North America; and inter-faith events such as the Parliament of World's Religions in Chicago in 1993, and in Cape Town, South Africa in 1999.

Considering that she is such a dynamic force, it should come as no surprise that she is a nuclear physicist! After obtaining a B Sc (Honours) in Physics and Mathematics from the University of Bombay in 1959, she went on to the University of Pittsburgh, USA to complete her Master's degree in Nuclear Physics. Her first job was as a Research Assistant at the Atomic Energy Establishment (now Bhabha Atomic Research Centre) in Mumbai, and was later a Research Associate in Nuclear Physics at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai.

In 1966, Roshan and her family immigrated to the USA. Initially, she worked at developing data acquisition and analysis systems for high energy physics experiments at particle accelerators at Argonne National Laboratory. Since 1982, she has been with Lucent Technologies (formerly AT&T) as a Software Engineer, designing and testing telephone switching system software for international markets.

Dr Mehroo D Hansotia

Mehroo D Hansotia

Mehroo Hansotia has a sentence-long list of Macronyms after her name all testifying to the fact that she is one of the most reknowned obstetricians and gynaecologists of India. Her pioneering work in the field of infertility and assisted reproduction has placed India on the map. Dr. Hansotia with her colleague Dr S K Desai have helped more than 400 couples realise their dream of having a family through their research in assisted reproduction.



6 November, 1939

She completed her schooling from Bai Avabai High School, Bulsar, and obtained her MBBS degree from Bombay University in 1962, and her MD in 1966. She proceeded to UK to become a Member of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologist (MRCOG). Over fifteen years later, she returned to England to become a Fellow of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (FRCOG) and a Fellow of the International College of Surgeons (FICS).

Mehroo Hansotia is a founder fellow of the Indian Academy of Juvenile and Adolescent Gynaecology and Obstetrics, and Indian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

She is a consultant at Breach Candy Hospital, Parsi General Hospital, and Masina Hospital in Mumbai. After serving as the Chairperson of the Infertility Committee of the Federation of Obstetrics & Gynaecological Societies of India (FOGSI) for five years, Mehroo was elected uncontested as the President of FOGSI in 1998 - 99. She used her position to champion adolescent girl education and empowerment, a cause dear to her heart. She brought UNICEF, the Government of India and eminent gynaecologists together on a common platform to spread awareness and education of reproductive health amongst teenagers.

Her list of research papers presented at national and international conferences and workshops merit a small booklet of its own! She has presented papers on various aspects of infertility at 105 national and international meetings. Her paper on *Treatment of Anovulation — Study of 90 Clomid Resistant Cases* presented at the 29th Annual Conference of International College of Surgeons held at Khatmandu, Nepal in 1983 was selected as the best paper presented at the Conference. Similarly, her paper on *Ultrasound, Ovarian Follicle and Infertility* presented at the 24th All India Obstetrician and Gynaecological Conference in 1985 was awarded the Dr C L Zaveri Prize.

Along with practicing medicine and conducting research, Mehroo Hansotia also teaches post graduate obstetrics and gynaecology at Bombay University, and the undergraduate classes at Grant Medical College, Mumbai, and Nowroji Wadia Maternity Hospital, Mumbai. She also acts as an examiner at the undergraduate level at the University of Bombay. She has served as an office bearer on managing committees and is a member of various Indian and international societies dealing with different aspects of obstetrics and gynaecology.

Dr Dolly Dastoor

Dolly Dastoor



16 November, 1939

Dolly Dastoor is a clinical psychologist, and her work in the field of ageing has brought her well-deserved accolades. She is specialising in the assessment of dementia, particularly Alzheimer's Disease, and has developed an assessment tool for the prognosis of this disease. In 1990, she was presented the Roberts Award for Outstanding Service in her field of expertise to the Douglas Hospital, Verdun, Canada.

Dolly was born in Mumbai, India, and obtained her Master's degree in Psychology from Bombay University. After her marriage in 1964, she moved with her husband to Ibadan, Nigeria. There she worked as a Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Psychiatry, University of Ibadan. She was the project co-ordinator for the World Health Organisation project *International Pilot Study on Schizophrenia*. She also worked on the Ford Foundation/Rockefeller Foundation project *Evaluation of Community Psychiatry in Nigeria*.

In 1973, her family moved to another continent when they settled in Montreal, Canada. She went back to studying, doing courses in USA and UK on various aspects of the treatment of elderly mentally

ill. In 1998, she obtained her Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Concordia University, Montreal. She is an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, and Member of the Centre for Aging, McGill University. She is also the clinical supervisor, Department of Psychology at McGill University, Concordia University, and University of Montreal.

Her interest in her work transcends the time she spends at the hospital or at the universities where she teaches. Over the years, Dolly has served as an office bearer for several societies and organisation including Alzheimer Society of Canada, Canadian Association of Gerontology, Canadian Psychological Association, and Shelter for Battered Women. She also has a long list of publications and articles on mental health, neuropsychology and psychogeriatrics to her credit.

In spite of her many professional commitments, Dolly still finds time to work for the community, particularly for enhancing the status of women around the world. In Ibadan, she was the Secretary and then President of the International Women's Society, and the University Women's Association. In 1970 she became a charter member of Zonta International, Ibadan. This is a world wide service organisation which promotes the status of women and since 1980 she has attended all the Zonta International Conventions. She is currently the District Lt Governor (2000-2002).

Her whole-hearted commitment to the affairs of the Zarathushti community cannot be measured by the list of the positions she has occupied — whether it is as the Chair, Fourth North American Zoroastrian Congress, Montreal (1982) or as the Secretary and then President of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America — because these designations do not give an inkling of the dedication, enthusiasm and vision behind the task. It is fitting that such a dynamic woman would be the Co-chair of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress, Houston, December 2000, at which outstanding women of the Zarathushti community are to be honoured.

Dame Meher Master-Moos

Meher



21 November, 1943

It is perhaps not so strange that a woman who has been conferred knighthoods by five countries — Belgium, The Netherlands, Italy, Russia and Britain — should have an academic history that spans three continents. Meher Master-Moos's initial schooling was in St Joseph's Convent School in Dar-es-Salam, Tanganyika. In 1964, she became the first Zarathushti woman to graduate in Law, Honour School of Jurisprudence from Oxford, England. This was just the first of her many firsts. She went on to become the first oriental woman to win the Barbour Fellowship for Law at the Michigan University, USA in 1968, and the first non-European woman to be appointed on the faculty of Law in Canada when she joined the University of Manitoba, Canada, in 1969. She is a Barrister-at-Law from Lincoln's Inn, London; Advocate of the Bombay High Court, and has taught Law in Canada, Australia and India. She has been presented honorary Doctorate degrees from seven universities in different countries.

Her achievements in as diverse fields as law, alternative medicine, humanitarian service and education have been recognised worldwide. She became the first person to be awarded the

prestigious UNO Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld *Pax Mundi Award* in 1968, the only other Indian so honoured was late Mother Teresa. She is also the only Indian to have been awarded the Albert Schweitzer Medal for humanitarian services. His Holiness Pope John Paul II conferred the medal of Inter-Faith Peace Promotion on her in 1986, and the Khazakastan Academy of Sciences presented the medal of Chokhan Valikhanov for scientific research and collaboration in 1992.

Meher Master-Moos is also the founder President of Mazdayasnie Monasterie Charity Trust; People to People International, Mumbai Chapter; All India Shah Behram Baug Society for Scientific and Educational Research, and the Zoroastrian College, Sanjan, India. The Zoroastrian College has departments for studies in Avesta and Zarathushti scripture as well as inter-faith studies, holistic health studies, ecology and environmental studies, and mystic sciences. The Zoroastrian College research library has a collection of over ten thousand books, many of them rare, in various languages including Avesta and Pazend. The enduring value of this unique collection is indicated by the fact that since 1990 over fifty scholars from five continents have used the facilities for their doctoral research. Through the auspices of the College's Department of Environment and Ecology, information about the latest inexpensive technology for water purification is being disseminated amongst the local population. This is the only technology available that can purify chemical, biological and nuclear contamination of water, and as such has far reaching implications on world health programmes.

With all this, she still finds time to write and has fifteen books to her credit on as diverse topics as International Law, and Alternative Medicine. Her first book, *Dual Nationality and the Constitution* was launched by the President of India in 1970. Her book *Rainbow Colours of Light and Medicine Alternativa* has been translated into Russian and German.

Shireen Khushroo Kiash

To represent one country in any given sport is justifiably a reason for pride, but Shireen Kiash has the unmatched distinction of being the only sportsperson to have represented India in three sports — basketball, hockey and cricket. She is affectionately known as “India’s triple international”.

S. K. Kiash



1 November, 1949

Shireen was born in Mumbai, but grew up in Calcutta. Right from the earliest days she was greatly interested in sports, flying kites, shooting baskets and scoring runs with the boys in the neighbourhood. In spite of the hours devoted to sports, she did not neglect her studies and passed her Senior Cambridge with flying colours from the Calcutta Girls’ School in 1966 . In her final year at school she won the Ada M Paul Gold Medal for the most outstanding all-rounder in sports. Typically, she did not waste the months till her Cambridge results were announced but enrolled in a short commercial course to study stenography. She graduated in Arts from Loreto College, Calcutta, and became a secretary in a large Calcutta concern.

Shireen’s initial claim to fame came with basketball when she was on the Bengal team for close to a decade (1968 – 1977), and in the last year she took

over as captain. After a break of four years, she was recalled on the team and went on to bag the Most Valuable Player Trophy from the West Bengal Women's Basketball Association. In 1970, Shireen donned national colours at the Third Asian Basketball Confederation Women's Championship in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Her initiation into hockey was fated. Shireen had gone to cheer her local team Dow Hill, and when one of the players failed to show up, she was asked to replace her. Shireen went on to score the all-important goal which won her team the match. By 1966, she was representing Bengal in hockey and made a name for herself by scoring hat-tricks. In 1968, she was on India's team at the first Women Asian Hockey Championship at Delhi, India. After the games were over, she toured Japan as part of the Indian team.

In 1975, she represented West Bengal at cricket at the national level, winning the Best Batswoman Award of the tournament. She was member of the Indian Cricket team that played against Australia in 1975. Shireen also represented West Bengal against the visiting Australian team at Durgapur and not surprisingly was the one who hit the winning run, making West Bengal the only State team to defeat the Aussies. One interesting incident that has become part of the Kiash family lore is that two days after her marriage to Khushroo Kiash on 31 January 1975, Shireen boarded the train to Pune to go for cricket coaching along with other selected Bengal girls. There was a lot of resistance from family and friends, but her husband encouraged her to proceed and was there at the station to see her off. As the train pulled away from the station, her newly-wed husband could not tear himself away and jumped on the train as well!

Shireen also has a long list of awards for athletics, netball and table tennis. She coached her college and club teams in basketball and hockey and volunteers time to teach basketball to hearing-impaired students. In 1991, her family immigrated to Sydney, Australia and her commitment to sports has taken a new turn in that now she organises table-tennis and tennis tournaments and cricket matches.

Nominations Received

Tooran Shahriari Bahrami - *nominated twice*

Gohar Behmardi

Banoo Behzadi

Ratanbai Edulji Bamji

Dr Mehroo Dhunjisha Bengalee

Siloo Eurchshaw Bhagwager

Alan Rutton Bilimoria - *nominated twice*

Tehmina Peshotan Bhandara

Pervin B Bilimoria

Bhikaiji Rustomji Cama - *nominated thrice*

Dr Niloufer Jamshed Chinoy

Shireen Choksey

Aimai Jehangirji Commesariate

Asha Coorlawala

Dr Banoo Jehangir Coyaji - *nominated twice*

Behroze Manekjee Cursetjee

Dr Dolly Dastoor - *nominated twice*

Perveez M Dastur

Dr Armaity Sapur Desai

Dr Ketayun Ardeshir Dinshaw

Khorshedbanu Hoshang Dinshaw

Mani Dotiwala

Diana Fram Edulji

Gool Jija Elavia

Parichehr Namdar Freydooni


Arnavaz Godiwalla

Mehroo Dara Hansotia - *nominated twice*
Homai Byramshaw Illava
Mary Clubwala Jadhav
Khorshed Jungalwala
Piloo N Jungalwalla
Putlibai Jehangir Kabraji
Dr Mani Kamerkar
Dr Khorshed Sorabji Kanga
Alu Noshir Karani
Silloo K Kavarana
Shireen Khushroo Kiash
Sheroo Darabsha Kolsawala
Tajgohar Khodadad Kouchaki Khadem - *nominated twice*
Meherbano Kekobad Marker
Penaaz Masani
Dina G McIntyre - *nominated twice*
Hamabai J K Mehta
Dr Vera Mehta
Gool Khurshed Minwalla - *nominated thrice*
Dr Aban E Mistry
Dinoo Minoo Mistry
Roda Mistry - *nominated twice*
Homai Modi
Bachoobai Ardeshir F Moos - *nominated twice*
Dame Meher Master-Moos - *nominated twice*
Katayoon Namiranian
Dhunmai Edulji Nania
Bhikjaiji Palamkot
Meher Jamshed Patel - *nominated twice*
Mehroo M Patel

Lady Hirabai Cawasji J Readymoney - *nominated twice*
Roshan Rivetna - *nominated twice*
Amy B H J Rustomjee - *nominated twice*
Shirin B H J Rustomjee
Nerina P Rustomji
Farangis K Shahrokh - *nominated twice*
Manijeh K Shahrokh - *nominated thrice*
Firooozeh Ardeshiri Sharifabad
Bapsi Sidhwa - *nominated twice*
Khorshed Jal Sidhwa
Gohar Sorooshi
Khurshid Eduljee Taraporewalla
Bella Tata
Lady Mehri Tata
Prof Zarin Rustom Turel
Beroz N Vacha
Gul Dara Vakharia
Manijeh Minocher Vania - *nominated twice*
Jerbai Nusherwanji Wadia
Motlibai Maneckji N Wadia - *nominated twice*
Rashna Writer
Mahin Banoo Kianpour Yazdi

Submitted after the extended closing date, 15 April 2000, and not due to postal delays:

Zerbanoo Gifford – *mid May 2000*
Mani J Clubwala – *early June 2000*
Shirin Khobchehr Jahangiri – *early July 2000*



According to Iranian Mythology of Creation, Mashyani was the first woman on earth, and from her were born six sets of twins who gave rise to the rest of humankind. She epitomises all shades of womanhood – innocence and allure, tenacity and fragility, generosity and sentimentality. Even in legend she was shown equal to her male counterpart Mashya – “with arms on their shoulders,