



Zarathushti International Film Festival

2nd Zarathushti/Zoroastrian** International Film Festival on Ancient Persian Culture and Civilization is held on 25-27 October 2002 at:
Presentation House, 333 Chesterfield, North Vancouver.

The Show times are 6:00 - 7:50 pm and 8:10 -10 pm every night (total of 6 shows).

Due to time and space limitations, each film will be shown once only. These short and long films are in Video/DVD/Slide format and are made by professionals and amateurs.

The films are originally in Persian or English and 7 of them do not have much dialogue. For the non-English films, some translation will be provided.

Those interested can purchase a pass of \$15 for all six shows (advance buy) by contacting : (604) 926 9891, 986 4086 or from Mitra Shop (Clyde Ave, West Vancouver) or Pars Shop (Lonsdale, 15th St, North Vancouver).

If the "All Show" pass is not sold out, one hour prior to each show, the box office can sell the ticket of each show for \$4. Box Office Tel: (604) 990 3474.

The details of each show would be announced shortly. The details and the latest news of the festival can be obtained by visiting: www.oshihan.org/Pages/ZIFF.htm

Sponsors of the Festival are: Arts & Culture Commission of North Vancouver, Paivand Publication, Shahrvand Vancouver, Beyad-e Iran TV, Mitra Shop, Pars Shop, Mr. Allahyar Dabestani, Unex Multimedia Professional Group, Vanco Photographic Studio.

The Films are:

Persia, Older than History:

Film and slides about ancient monuments and historical sites. The old palaces, bridges, castles, engravings and temples are displayed. (no-dialogue)

Bobak's Castle:

Visiting this ancient Castle of a National Hero, Bobak Khorramdin who resisted and fought with the Arab invaders for 21 years. Famous scholar of Ancient Persian Culture, late Dr. Pouran Eslami and her husband produced this video in 1999. (Persian)

In Search of Zoroastra:

An Australian Journalist visits several historic sites in Iran in search of the oldest fire temple of Zoroastra. It is an entertaining film too and he also visits non-Zarathushti sites. (English)

Abyaneh:

The unique women's clothing, native language and ancient sites are shown in this film of the beautiful village near Natanz/Kashan in Iran. (few comments in Persian)

Always with Light:

The ancient fire temples and other pilgrimage sites are displayed and their stories are told. It is professionally produced by Pedram Akbari. Azargoshnasb Fire Temple, Chak Chakoo, Herisht, Fars Banoo, Naraki, Narestaneh, Sete Peer and Blassgird are amongst these sites. (Persian)

In the Footsteps of the Forefathers:

This documentary captures the journey of thirty four, Americans to Iran. This group of young Zoroastrians is very eager to trace their roots and history by visiting the country where one of the world's oldest monotheistic religion, their religion, Zoroastrianism, originated. Their desire to walk in the footsteps of their ancestors leads to this incredible journey. A trip that is full of risk - a pilgrimage that involves traveling to a country that has no American embassy - and a collective passion for their history that will not let any of this stop them. Besides following the evolution in the thoughts of the eager, young pilgrims, the film allows the viewer a rare glimpse of Iran, a country that has shut itself off from the rest of the world for the past 20 years.(English)

On Wings of Fire:

It is the first and only dramatic movie to be made about the Zoroastrian religion and its people.

In 1982 Zubin Mehta the renowned conductor, then the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, agreed with Cyrus Bharucha that a film about the teaching of Zarathushtra was due to be told to the world at large. For over 1000 years, the Iranian and Indian Zoroastrians have been very silent and in turn lost the history and meaning of their own great religion.

It was never intended to be a Parsee answer to Ben Hur or The 10 Commandments. Cyrus Bharucha, Jamshed and Meherji Madan produced a film with deep research and filmed it in a style that would be entertaining and educational at the same time. The film spans 3500 years of the history of the Zoroastrian people covering the life of the prophet, the heights of the Empire of Cyrus and Darius, the defeat of the Persians by Alexander, the coming of Islam, and all the way to the life of the Parsees in modern India.

Some of the leading actors of the UK and India star in the film- Nigel Terry as Zarathushtra, Paul Shelly as Vishtaspa, Amersh Puri, Syeed Jaffery, and Soni Razdan are amongst the stars that play pivotal roles in this dramatic and spectacular film. The research was done with scholars all over the world from Columbia University, to England, Toronto University and India. This film will take you to a time and place you may have only read about. (English)

Paradise:

The Master Piece of Shahriar Shahriari and Shervin Shahriari of Vancouver where Mojdeh Shahriari has put this on a nice video.

Long time friends and co-creators, Shahriar Shahriari and Shervin Shahriari, tell the story of the Zoroastrian nation. Their deep thoughts take them to pleasant childhood memories and bring them face to face with Ashoo Zarathushtra and Cyrus the Great. Following the footsteps of these leaders they offer the Zoroastrian community their vision of the future. Paradise is a video production of an international presentation, which had been given to wide audiences in several cities in Canada, USA and Pakistan. (English)

Tabriz Museum:

This museum in North West of Iran holds many antique items as old as 4000 years BC. Dr. Pouran Eslami and her husband have visited this interesting place and captured the videos of almost all of these ancient and pre-Islamic artistic items. (Persian with English Scripts)

Fire On the Roof:

An amateur filmmaker has made this video of a night in Mazra Kalantar, Yazd, Iran where almost every house in the village put fire on their roofs until the dawn. (No Dialogue)

Parseh, Persepolis:

Film and slides about ancient monuments and historical sites with explanations on: Persepolis, Pasargad, Achaemenian and Naghsh-e Rostam. (English)

Hiromba:

This unique fire festivity in Sharifabad, Yazd, Iran has been captured on video by B. Jahani. (No Dialogue)

Last Words of the Mobed:

The last interview with the great and late Mobed (Magi or Priest) of Iran, Mobed Rostam Shahzadi. A week after this, he sadly passed away. It is his social and religious will too. (Persian)

That Old Man:

Feraydoon Demehri talks to a man whom he does not know. It is on the main road of a village of Yazd, called Cham. The dialogue is about life, death, children, nursing home and other simple subjects of life. It is the first documentary in Dari (Zarathushti native language in Iran).

Circle of 4:

Four young adults from Vancouver Canada, Mandana Edalati, Nooshin Kiani, Mehrbanoo Poulad-Noshiravan and Shervin Shahriari write, direct and produce the "Circle of 4" video film to not only document certain unique characteristic of the Zoroastrian Community but also to educate the viewer on Zoroastrian religion and history. The "Circle of 4" is a combination of an amateur short film and educational segments. In addition, it contains four very short but interesting interview segments on King Arthur's origins, Sports and other Zoroastrian topics. (English)

Norooz Festivity in Tajikistan:

This video shows parts of the Norooz Celebration including beautiful Tajik Songs, Dance and reading of poems. The Tajiki dialogue is a branch of Persian and sweet to hear for Persian-speakers. As it is mostly music and dances, there is not much to be translated.

Norooz in Bakoo:

During the Norooz time (Persian New Year, 21st March), Hamid Zargarzadeh was invited to take a wedding film in Bakoo, Azerbaijan where he tries to visit an old Fire Temple still burning with Gas. He also shows parts of a strange museum. (No dialogue)

Four Years of Peer-e Sabz:

Peer-e Sabz is the most famous Zoroastrian pilgrimage site in Yazd, Iran. Zoroastrians of Vancouver, British Columbia go out to Shannon Falls and celebrate this event in memory of the big event back in the motherland. This video shows parts of the ceremony for the first 4 years.

First Sadeh in Herisht:

Sadeh Festivity, the occasion of Fire Creation by the Human Being on the 100th day of the big winter, 29th January, is celebrated by Zoroastrians and other Persians. In Yazd, since 2001, the festival is held in Herisht, a pilgrimage site near Ardakan, Yazd. (some comments in Persian)

Charshanbe Soory

The last Tuesday Night of the Persian Year (Starts on the beginning of Spring, 21st March) is celebrated by all Persians by making bon fires and jumping over it, singing and performing certain traditions. Although the way it is performed now days, is not Zoroastrian, but every festivity which has a fire component, shall be searched for its roots in this Ancient Persian Religion. Majid Mahichi of Vancouver has made this film for

a Persian TV Channel few years ago and depicts its traditions and superstitions.
(Persian)

Alleys of Memories:

This very short video brings the memories back for the Zoroastrians who lived in "Mahale" of Yazd. (No Dialogue)

An Old House:

This short video shows the rooms and the architecture of an old Zoroastrian House in Yazd. (no dialogue)

The Raw Brick:

Pedram Akbari, a professional filmmaker, has made this video about 20 years ago. Shows parts of the oldest and active fire temple in Yazd and the death remembrance ceremony (Foroudogue) in Yazd. (Persian)

Office of ZIFF
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****NOTES ON THE ZARATHUSHTI RELIGION**

Among faiths practiced in the world today, the Zarathushti religion, also known as Zoroastrianism or Zarathushtrianism, is little known and rarely mentioned. Today, there are an estimated 275,000 Zarathushtis in the world; yet, at one time, theirs was the religion of the mighty Persian empires that stretched across central Asia for a thousand years; and one that has left a timeless legacy to religious thought that is as relevant today as when it was revealed 3500 years ago.

Acknowledged as one of the earliest monotheistic faiths, the Zarathushti religion, revealed around 1,400 BCE in eastern Persia by Prophet Zarathushtra (Zoroaster to the Greeks) embraces the worship of one God, Ahura Mazda (Wise Lord). The corpus of Zarathushti scriptures, known as the Avesta includes the Gathas, divine hymns of Zarathushtra, in which men and women are encouraged to use their good mind (Vohu Manah) to vanquish evil and move God's creation towards the final renovation (frashokereti). They are granted freedom of choice with personal responsibility for one's actions. In Zarathushtra's vision, one strives to develop the divine values of the good mind (Vohu Manah), truth/righteousness (Asha), strength and service (Kshathra Vairya) and piety/devotion (Armaiti) to attain the twin rewards of perfection (Haurvatat) and immortality (Ameretat). The world evolves toward renovation and excellence through the collective good acts of humanity.

The Zarathushti religion is also known as "The Good Religion" due to its commitment to ethical and moral excellence through the three-fold path of "Good thoughts, Good words and Good deeds" (Humata, Hukhta, Huvareshtha). Living in harmony with nature, and veneration of all manifestations of light and fire as symbols of Ahura Mazda's creations and goodness, are also central to Zarathushtra's teachings.

The religion was dominant for over a thousand years in Persia during the Achaemenian (559 - 334 BCE), Parthian (250 BCE - 227 CE) and Sassanian (226 - 651 CE) Empires, stretching across central Asia, west towards Rome and Greece, east into India, north into Russia and south into Egypt. The liberation of the Jews from captivity in Babylon in 539 BCE by the Persian King Cyrus and his assistance in rebuilding their temple in Jerusalem, was a historic event for which he was hailed as Messiah [Isaiah 45:1-3]. The tolerance and kindness of Cyrus and his successors toward the religious practices of diverse peoples is recorded in the Edict of Cyrus, recognized as the world's first declaration of human rights. It was during the ensuing centuries of Persian rule that Zarathushti doctrines (such as belief in one supreme God, heaven and hell, individual judgment, ultimate triumph of good over evil, the final judgment and a Messiah to come for the final restoration) entered Judaic and Christian theologies.

A dispiriting period in Zarathushti history followed the conquest of Persia in 334 BCE by Alexander of Macedonia, and his wanton destruction of the capital city, Persepolis, and all Zarathushti religious texts. The religion was rejuvenated as the imperial religion of the Sasanian Persian Empire and followers numbered in the millions. It reeled once again with the advent of Islam; after a crucial battle with the Arabs in 641 CE sovereignty passed into the hands of Islamic caliphs.

In Islamic Persia, Zarathushtis faced oppression causing many to flee in order to practice their religion. The few shiploads that fled to the shores of India in the 10th Century maintained their religious identity and came to be known as Parsis. Those Zarathushtis who remained in Persia endured centuries of discrimination and persecution. In more recent Zarathushti history, Parsi Zarathushtis became influential as industrialists and philanthropists during the British rule in India, commanding an influence well out of proportion to their small numbers. Their co-religionists in Iran came to gradual recognition in the twentieth century as traders, merchants and entrepreneurs.

In the past half-century, Zarathushtis have emigrated around the world, readily absorbing the host culture, while practicing their religion with devotion, and endeavoring to keep the spark of their ancient tradition alive. Approximately 25,000 Zarathushtis live in North America, 12,000 in Europe, 2,500 in Australia, 2,500 in Pakistan, with the largest concentrations remaining in Iran (150,000) and India (76,500). The survival of the Zarathushti religion through the vicissitudes of time and history, is remarkable when one considers the devastations it suffered in conquests, destruction of scriptures, annihilation of priests who maintained the oral tradition, persecutions and forced conversions, and more recent doctrinal disputes and threat of assimilation. Despite these, the essence of Zarathushtra's timeless and universal message has been preserved and perpetuated as new generations of Zarathushtis recognize the remarkable relevance of this ancient faith in today's world.