

Jamshedi Navroz

A Parsi New Year Celebration

拜火節探奇

巴斯人在香港過新年

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「拜火節」(Jamshedi Navroz)，也就是伊朗人的新年，源自古時的波斯帝國，是所羅斯德教（亦即祆教，又稱拜火教）的宗教傳統。最早慶祝這個節日的歷史紀錄遠至二世紀。它的意義等同於中國人的農曆新年：整個社會一同慶祝春天的來臨，並趁此探望親朋好友，互道祝福。

“Jamshedi Navroz”，also known as the Iranian New Year, is a festival that came from ancient Persia and the religious traditions of Zoroastrianism, with historical records tracing back to as early as the 2nd century. Like the Chinese Lunar New Year, this festival is to celebrate the arrival of spring with the community, and visit friends and relatives to exchange blessings.

在香港，只有約二百三十五名在香港工作與生活的祆教徒會慶祝拜火節。每年的三月二十一日，這群教徒會聚在一起，吃新年聚餐並集體禱告，地點均在禮頓道一百零一號的善樂施大廈。這座商業大廈既是祆教慈善基金名下的物業，也是在港祆教徒的「社區中心」。

In Hong Kong, Jamshedi Navroz is celebrated by a small community of 235 Zoroastrians who live and work in the city. Every year on March 21st, its community members would gather together for a festive meal and prayers. The celebrations always take place at the Zoroastrian Building, 101 Leighton Road which acts as both commercial building owned by the Incorporated Trustees of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds and community centre for Zoroastrians living in Hong Kong.

未來城市研究所致力研究多元文化如何有利於國際大都市的將來發展，令這些城市更具創意、更加創新。我希望透過這篇文章，與讀者分享巴斯人在香港的歷史、傳統和貢獻，讓大家思考香港如何能夠成為包容更多文化群體的社會，使香港不負「亞洲國際都會」的名號。

At the Institute of Future Cities, we look at how cultural diversity is beneficial for the growth of creativity and innovation in future cosmopolitan cities. This article aims to share the history, traditions and contributions of Parsis in Hong Kong, and to offer some food for thought on how Hong Kong can become a more culturally inclusive society and truly claim its international reputation as Asia's World City.

誰是祆教徒？

Who are the Zoroastrians?

「所有人都說，我們的宗教所羅斯德教（祆教）十分神秘，因為它起源自古代的波斯。也許在港祆教徒人數不多，少人認識我們，他們才覺得神秘吧。又或許，我們在火前祈禱的習俗，在他們眼中並不尋常。事實上，火在祆教裡非常神聖，也象徵著『神的兒子』，在我們的宗教儀式中不可或缺。」祆教祭司那斯拉畢華拉說。這群住在香港的「神秘人」，我們稱之為「巴斯人」，那斯拉畢華拉是這個群體的宗教領袖。

“Everyone tells me that our religion, Zoroastrianism, sounds very mysterious because it is originally from Ancient Persia. Perhaps this is because our community is very small, so not many people know about it; hence the ‘mysterious’ label. It is also an unusual concept to others that we pray in front of fire. Fire is very holy in Zoroastrianism and is seen as a symbol of the son of God. It is always used in our religious ceremonies,” says Ervad (priest) Homyar Nasirabadwala. This “mysterious” community living in Hong Kong is also known as the Parsis, and Ervad Homyar Nasirabadwala is the community's religious leader.

「巴斯人」這一名稱是從波斯語言而來，意思就是「波斯人」。巴斯人最早的定義，是來自波斯（今伊朗）並信奉祆教的人，那也是世上最古老的一神論宗教。祆教本是波斯帝國的國教，但自從伊斯蘭教的影響力走出阿拉伯半島以外，祆教徒就受到宗教迫害，八至十世紀時，許多祆教徒逃亡至印度。今日的巴斯人視「印度」為國籍，但仍然會強調自己「祖籍波斯」。孟買擁有最大的巴斯人群體，約有四萬五千人在當地聚居及工作。另外，英國、美國、加拿大、澳洲、阿聯酋等地亦有為數不少的巴斯人。

The term “Parsis” came from Persian language and literally means Persian. The Parsis were originally from Persia (modern day Iran) and practice Zoroastrianism, the world's oldest monotheistic religion. It was once Persia's state religion but when Islam spread beyond the Arabian Peninsula, there was religious persecution upon Zoroastrians and many were forced to flee to India from the 8th - 10th century. Today, Parsis see themselves as Indians by nationality, but with a distinct ethnic identity that originated from Persia. Their largest community resides in Mumbai with around 45,000 living and working there. Significant Parsi communities can also be found in the United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada, Australia, United Arab Emirates and etc.



保留傳統的「拜火節」節慶

Celebrating Jamshedi Navroz: Keeping Traditions Alive

拜火節是在每年的三月二十一日，節日的準備工作非常認真，因為這是巴斯人群體最大的節慶之一。拜火節前約一個月，家家戶戶會把家裡徹底打掃乾淨，就好像中國人農曆新年前的大掃除。巴斯人並會在家中放一隻瓷碟，上面浸泡著各式種子如小麥、大麥與扁豆，好等到拜火節時，長出的嫩芽會有三至四吋高。他們會把這些嫩芽放在鋪了白布的桌上，象徵新一年創造力強、生產力高。

Jamshedi Navroz takes place on March 21st every year and its festival preparations are taken most seriously, as it is one of the biggest Parsi community festivals. Around a month before Navroz, every house gets a thorough cleaning, which is very similar to the Chinese spring-cleaning ritual during Lunar New Year. Inside every Parsi household, a variety of seeds like wheat, barley and lentils are also soaked to grow on china plates, so the sprouts are around 3-4 inches in height by Navroz. These sprouts are then placed on a table covered with a white cloth, symbolising creativity and productivity for the coming year.

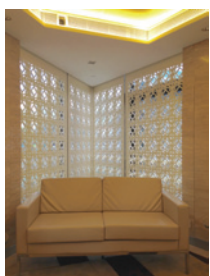
傳統上，祆教徒的敬拜都在「拜火廟」裡進行。拜火廟在印度很常見，尤其在最多巴斯人居住的孟買。拜火廟內每個殿都點燃著聖火，有的更是數世紀以來都未曾熄滅。在香港的巴斯人祝禱殿內，也燃著一把宗教儀式用的聖火，它自一九三一年，亦即善樂施大廈的舊廈建成的那年起燃燒至今。

Traditionally speaking, fire temples are places of worship for Zoroastrians. These are commonly found in India, especially in Mumbai where most Parsis live, and there is always a holy fire burning inside every prayer hall; some of which have been burning for centuries. In Hong Kong, there is also a holy fire used for religious rituals at the community's prayer hall. It has been burning since 1931, when the Zoroastrian building was first built.



三月二十一日那天，祆教祭司會早早起床，把新香和新鮮的檀香木加到聖火中，然後為教徒頌唱祝禱。在香港，巴斯人首先齊集大殿，一同誦經；然後在善樂施大廈的活動室裡擺上盛大的宴會。祆教沒有任何食戒，因此宴會上絕對不缺酒肉，教徒可隨意吃喝。

On March 21st, the Zoroastrian priest gets up early to make sure fresh incense and sandalwood are added to the holy fire before chanting prayers for the community. In Hong Kong, the Parsis gather together at the prayer hall to recite prayers before everyone shares a large feast held at the Zoroastrian building's very own function room. There are no dietary restrictions in Zoroastrianism, so alcohol and meat are freely and almost always served.



巴斯人在香港的歷史與貢獻

In Hong Kong: Parsis' History and Contributions to Society

回到大英帝國統治期間的印度，巴斯人是最早參與帝國貿易活動的種族群體之一。他們憑著棉花和鴉片的貿易生意，不僅賺得大量財富，還藉此在印度（特別是孟買）建立起政治與經濟上的影響力。

During the British colonial rule in India, the Parsis were one of the first ethnic groups to integrate with the empire's trading activities. They set up trading businesses in cotton and opium, gaining vast amounts of wealth that grew into political and economic influence in India, especially Mumbai.

巴斯人在十八世紀末開始進入中國，但後來因戰亂而移居香港。他們也把大量的資金、技術、人脈關係和影響力帶來香港，幫助早期的香港發展一些重要基礎建設。其中一位最成功的在港巴斯商人便是麼地爵士，他捐出一筆巨資，成立了香港大學。

The Parsis first arrived in China during the late 18th century but later migrated to Hong Kong due to war conflicts in the mainland. This brought in a lot of capital, skills, networks and influence to Hong Kong, which helped the city develop some of its most important infrastructures. One of the most successful Parsi businessmen in Hong Kong is Sir Hormusjee Naorojee Mody, who donated a great sum of money to establish the University of Hong Kong.

其他在港赫赫有名的巴斯人還包括律敦治家族、施羅孚家族等，他們都為推動香港金融和交通基建出力甚大。在我搜集資料時，我才驚覺自己原來一直不知道，巴斯人在我長大的城市留下了如此多的貢獻，甚至早已成為了我城的一部分。一些耳熟能詳的街道如麼地道、旭龢道，都以香港早期的巴斯名人命名。還有律敦治醫院、天星小輪和九龍木球會，都是巴斯人建立起來的。

Other noticeable Parsi families in Hong Kong include the Ruttonjees, Shroffs and etc. who helped forge the city's financial and transportation infrastructures. Throughout my research, I was stunned to learn how much I didn't know about the Parsis' role in shaping the city I grew up in. Some familiar street names like Mody Road and Kotewall Road were named after famous Parsis. Furthermore, the Ruttonjee Hospital, Star Ferry and Kowloon Cricket Club are also Parsi establishments.



每年十月十二日，祆教祭司會來到香港大學，舉行簡單儀式慶祝麼地爵士的壽辰。

Each October 12th, the Zoroastrian priest would visit the university to conduct a simple ceremony of thanks on Sir Mody's birthday.



我問許多友人是否知道巴斯人在香港的事跡，他們大多所知甚少，也深感詫異：今天香港擁有「國際級都市」的地位，多少要感謝這群少數族裔，但他們的貢獻在今時今日的社會，竟然如此不受重視。

I asked many friends whether they know about this aspect of Hong Kong's history, and many were amazed by how little is known about how this city grew to its "international" status today when its contributors from ethnic minority backgrounds are so underappreciated.

其實，巴斯人的影響力並不止於他們對香港的貢獻。巴斯人是印度其中一個最適應城市生活、教育程度最高的少數族裔，因此在當地深受敬重，巴斯人建立的生意、有關巴斯人的地標、塑像等等遍佈孟買。現代印度的「國父」甘地曾這樣評價巴斯人的社會地位：「巴斯人的數量不值一書，但巴斯人所作的貢獻，不可斗量。」

In fact, the Parsis were not only influential in their contributions to Hong Kong. As one of the most urbanised and literate ethnic minority groups in India, they are well respected in their home society where Parsi businesses, landmarks and statues are found across Mumbai. India's Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, once made a remark about the Parsis' role in society: "In numbers Parsis are beneath contempt, but in contribution, beyond compare."

我問祭司，現在香港人都忘記了巴斯人在香港的歷史與貢獻，他有甚麼感覺？「人們要記得我們是十分困難的，畢竟我們為數很少。一些大學生跟我說，他們不知道香港大學是由巴斯人創立，我也覺得傷感。但我也認為歷史是無法輕易抹去的。像今天，我們在香港街頭依然到處看見以巴斯人命名的公共機構。在跑馬地，我們有巴斯人墳場；很多街道也以出名的巴斯人命名。還有許多學生、大學研究員、記者和宗教機構來找我了解更多祆教的事情，看到更多香港人對我們的宗教和族群感興趣，是值得高興的。」

I asked Ervad (priest) Homyar Nasirabadwala how he felt about the forgotten Parsi history and contributions in Hong Kong: "It is difficult for people to remember us because our community is very small in number. It is also saddening when some university students tell me they had no idea that HKU was built by a Parsi. But I also think history doesn't let you forget about the past so easily. Even today, you can still find Parsi institutions around Hong Kong. There is a Parsi cemetery in Happy Valley, and plenty of street names named after famous Parsis. Many student groups, university researchers, journalists and religious organisations approach me to learn more about Zoroastrianism and I am happy to witness a growing interest in Hong Kong to learn more about our religion and community."



位於跑馬地的巴斯人墳場
The Parsee cemetery in Happy Valley

對多元文化的啟示

On Multiculturalism: A Lesson to Learn From

在我研究「巴斯人在香港」的歷史期間，我讀到一則發人深省的巴斯人故事，使我重新思考人們對於一個社會如何接納不同文化和看待移民的想法。

Throughout my research on the Parsis in Hong Kong, I came across a most inspiring story about the Parsis which allowed me to rethink how people think about cultural acceptance and immigrants' role in society.

當年，巴斯人因為波斯的宗教迫害而逃到印度，他們最先到達印度最西邊的古吉拉特邦，並向當地王國尋求庇護。印度王公雖有憐憫之心，但卻因憂慮要接收大量難民而遲疑不決。於是，他指著一杯幾乎滿溢的牛奶，寓意王國已經人滿為患，沒法再收留更多人口了。這時，一位祆教祭司站了出來，在牛奶中加進一撮砂糖，表示他的人民就像砂糖一樣，不會令牛奶滿瀉，反而令牛奶更香甜。祭司的回應深深打動了王公，王公決定讓他們進入印度避難，並任由他們在印度從事自己的宗教活動和跟從宗教傳統。

When the Parsis fled religious persecution from Persia and arrived in India, they landed in the state of Gujarat (west India) requesting for asylum at the local kingdom. The Indian raja was sympathetic but also hesitant in receiving a large population of refugees. He pointed to a vessel of milk filled to the brim to imply that his kingdom was already full and could not accept more people. A Zoroastrian priest stepped up to add a pinch of sugar to the milk, indicating that his people are like sugar which would not cause the milk vessel to overflow. Instead, they will only sweeten the milk and make it taste better. The Indian raja was very impressed by the Zoroastrian priest's response, thus he gave shelter to them and allowed them to practice their religion and traditions freely in India.

作為移民族群，巴斯人對香港（尤其早年社會的發展）貢獻巨大。我們的城市一向自詡「中西合璧」，但事實上，為香港的成就作出貢獻者，其實來自更加複雜的文化背景。

As an immigrant population, the Parsis in Hong Kong have contributed significantly especially during the early growths of our society. Our city prides itself as the place where "East meets West", but our society actually stems from an even more diverse historical experience that helped built its triumphant success today.

許多外國友人對我說，無論現在或過去，香港也是個令人驚歎的國際城市，來自各行各業各界的人都來這裡尋找機遇。作為香港人，我為她今天的地位感到自豪，也希望她的未來更加璀璨。如果我們能夠更深入了解我們的歷史，以批判的眼光，回顧我們過往接納不同文化的經驗如何使香港踏上今天的成功，我相信香港的將來會比現在更有競爭力，成為更加吸引的國際都會。✧

Many of my foreign friends tell me Hong Kong is incredibly international, in both its past and present, with people coming from all walks of life to the city for opportunities. As a Hong Konger, I am proud to own this reputation and hope to see it continue to flourish. If we can encourage a better understanding of our past, and critically think about how our historical experience of accepting cultural diversity helped shape our current success, Hong Kong can become an even more competitive and attractive global city than it is today. ✧