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Issue Dedicated To Spring Celebrations

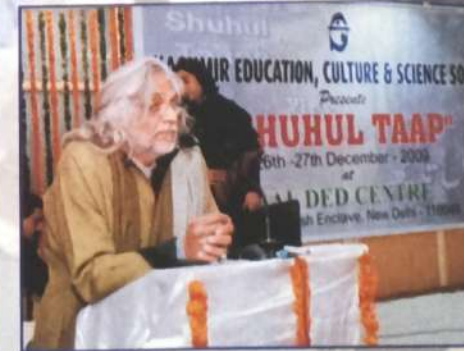
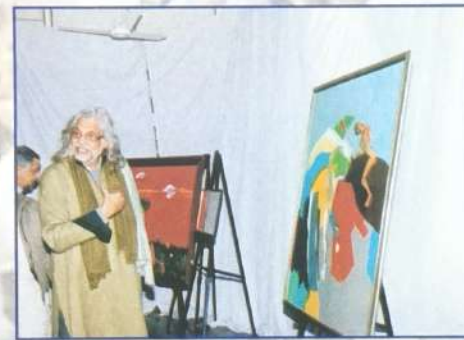
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## news letter

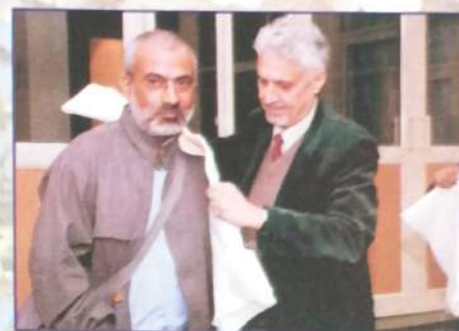
April '10



## Painting Exhibition



Felicitation



## Felicitation and Kavi Sammelan



## Shuhul Taaph - A Confidence Index – Jashn-e-Kashmir revisited

I was put on a time machine and taken decades back to the times of a month long celebrations- Jashn-e-Kashmir of late fifties in the valley. Something for everybody to rejoice. Chakari/Qawali at Mugal Gardens, Dramas and Film Actors Program at Tagore Hall, Mushaira at Reception Centre, Water Games at Nehru Park, River Procession along the Jehlum (Vyeth), college competitions, late nights out and no questions asked. What a miss for the present generation. KECSS attempted to redraw the scene.

Shuhul Taaph was a real treat. VIPs, artists, painters, musicians and poets, writers and critics, doctors, scientists and spiritual leaders all together at one place. It was SWARGA all around - rarest of a rare occasion.

The package received a better community response. Bravo KECSS. Gifting of a painting of late G R Santosh by Prof. CL Sapru and release of book on late Motilal Saqi, distribution of C L Gadoo's book on Temples of Kashmir proved icing on the cake. No more survival tactics but clear revival instincts with a defiance. It has to be a bigger affair next time, reflecting our stature and strength. - **Shiban Raina**

### KECSS, Two day Kashmir festival 'Shuhul Taaph' Concludes First Autobiography in Kashmiri by Moti Lal Saqi Released New Delhi

The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (KECSS) organized a 2-days Kashmiri Festival under the banner Shuhul Taaph- 2009 on 26-27 December 2009. The highlight of the festival was Painting Exhibition of Kashmiri Arts of over 20 artists of repute, which was inaugurated by the famous film maker Mr. Muzafar Ali on 26th December 2009 at KECSS, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi.

The inaugural function of the festival was started with the opening Santoor Vaadan by the famous young santoor maestro, Mr. Abhay Rustum Sopori. This traditional Kashmiri instrument was the highlight of that evening followed by cultural programme/music programme by Shri Dhananjay Kaul, the famous Kashmiri Singer of the society.

The two day Kashmir festival 'Shuhul Taaph' saw an exciting performance by the cultural troupe of the Jammu and Kashmir Cultural Academy. The hall was jam-packed at the Lal Ded Centre and emotional scenes were witnessed after people watched the performance in which more than 40 artists participated. There were many moist eyes and emotional scenes in the Hall as the troupe brought to the fore the glory of Kashmiri culture. The team led by the young and dynamic Secretary of the J&K Cultural Academy, Zafar Iqbal Manhas, received a standing ovation from the audience at the end of the presentation. Mr. Manhas announced that Academy will continue its efforts to show case the rich and diverse culture of Kashmir

across India. He urged the people to come forward and join cultural dialogue to bridge the gap among different communities in the wake of turmoil in Jammu and Kashmir State. Santoor Maestro Abhay Rustum Sopori and noted Sufi singer Dhananjay Kaul won great applause from the audience during their performances in the two day event. The musical part of the festival was dedicated to legendary singer Ghulam Hasan Sofi, who passed away recently.

The painting exhibition depicting the evolution of Kashmiri Schools of Paintings was another important highlight of the event. Art works of 20 painters from Kashmir including those of Veer Munshi, Mir Imtiyaz, Shabir Santosh, P N Kachroo, Neeraj Bakshi, M.K. Bhat, Ashutosh Sapru, Deepshalini, Shafi Chaman, Geeta Das, Rajinder Tickoo, Gayoor Hassan, Kishori Kaul, K Khosa and others were part of this exhibition which was applauded by the large number people particularly art lovers and artists from other parts of the country.

This section of the festival was dedicated to G R Santosh and Bansi Parimoo, two prominent painters who passed away in the last 20 years.

A Mehfil-e-Mushaira was also organised in which prominent poets including Fayaz Dilber, Vijay Saqi, B.N. Betab and Balkrishan Sanyasi and others participated.

The first Autobiography in Kashmiri titled 'Shej Wath' by celebrated poet and author Moti Lal Saqi was also released on the occasion. Saqi deals at length in the book on political upheavals in Kashmir, apart from his personal life

in which he witnessed extreme of poverty and deprivation.

The Secretary Culture, Government of India, Jawahar Scircar and Secretary J&K Academy of Culture and Arts, Zafar Iqbal were the chief guests on the occasion who also released Academy's Calendar - 2010. Speaking on the occasion Secretary Culture, Mr. Scircar assured all help and support to the NGO's from his ministry for promoting Kashmiri Culture and literature. He said that there are specific schemes with his ministry for the promotion and urged the Cultural Academy and other NGO'S including KECSS to come forward with the proposals in this regard.

Three prominent personalities including S N Bhat 'Haleem' Poet and Broadcaster, Dr. Sushil Razdan noted Neurologist and Dr R N K Bamezai an expert scientist on genome were conferred the prestigious KECSS AWARDS-2009 for their outstanding contribution to the respective field. Secretary - Bio Technology, Dr. M K Bhan, the Chief Guest on the occasion, and Secretary - Cultural Academy, Zafer Iqbal Manhas, presented the awards amidst huge applause from the audience. Shri Bhan said that culture can be kept alive by language and one must not forget it.

Prof. B.N. Kaul, Head of the Ramkrishna Ashram, Srinagar, Kashmir was also felicitated by KECSS for his outstanding service to the poor and humanity for the past several decades in Srinagar, Kashmir.

KECSS also released the 3rd issue of its newsletter with the theme of the festival 'Shuhul Taaph'. The convenor of the newsletter, Mr. Shibanji Raina has taken all pains to produce this issue right in time for the function with excellent collection of paintings from the experts of Kashmiri artists.

The two day festival was not an attraction for the Kashmiri people alone, but also many prominent personalities including three time Green Oscar Winner

Mike Pandey, noted Film Maker Muzaffar Ali and ambassadors from several countries.

The tone for the festival was set by the President of the Society Prof B B Dhar who opened the two-day festival by his welcome address giving the background of the festival and the commitment that KECSS made to the community for the years to come. He said the intention is to promote language, culture, literature, poetry, arts and crafts of Kashmir, so that the traditional system of Kashmiriyat remains intact. He appreciated the work done by Mr. Vijay Saqi, the Convenor of 'Shuhul Taaph'-2009 together with Mr. Arun Shalia, General Secretary, KECSS who also extended vote of thanks to the participants and the dignitaries, and announced that it may be a week long event from next year. Dr. S.N. Kaul, Vice-President, KECSS also spoke on this occasion and gave a brief on the concept of 'Shuhul Taaph'.

The eminent persons who attended the two-days festival amongst others are Shri A.N. Kaul Saheb, Shri. D.N. Munshi, Dr. Romesh Raina, Dr. Sushila Bhan, Mrs. Girija Bhan, Mr. Kishen Langoo, Shri B.N. Betab (Poet), Dr. R.K. Bhat, Mr. Veer Munshi (Artist), Mr. Neeraj Bakshi (Artist), Mr. P.N. Kachroo (Artist), Mr. M.L. Kachroo (KHBS) Ms. Poonam Zutshi (Artist), Mr. Fayaz Dilber (Poet), Mr. Meer Imtiaz (Artist), Mr. Shabir Santosh (Artist), Mr. Anil Nikhasi (Artist), Mr. Rajender Tiku (Artist), Mr. Moti Lal Naaz (Poet), Mr. Ravinder Ravi (Poet), Mr. Puran Patwari, Mr. L.C. Kaul, Dr. Hashia, Dr. M.L. Dhar, Mr. P.L. Dhar, Ms. Ratan Kaul and several other prominent members of the Biradri, and by a large number of Press/Media and T.V. persons visiting and covering the event.

**Prof. B.B. Dhar, President, KECSS**  
**Arun Shalia, General Secretary, KECSS**

## Prof. K.R.G. Nair's Lecture on Ageing : A Report

- M.L. Pandit

A Public Lecture was organized at Pamposh Public School on 17-08-09. The Speaker, Professor K.R.G. Nair, is a retired academician of the University of Delhi. He got his Ph.D. on 'Interregional Disparities' from Delhi School of Economics. He taught various aspects of economics for forty three years, and published ten books on his chosen field (Economics), and "Ageing."

Prof. Nair. Said, in his texture, that the problem regarding 'ageing' is that it is different to draw the line between youth and old age. Some say that at fifty you say good bye to middle-age, but others are of the opinion that life really begins at sixty. The statisticians believe in extrapolating the statistics. For instance, how would you react if someone told you that his mother died at the young age of 89. In 2000, We had very few aged before in India. Words like 'Young' and 'Old' have become fancy terms.

The question arises what is the negative aspect of 'ageing.' The aged people need care, especially when the old ladies of the house are working in the kitchen. This is the age of nuclear families, and when working women go to office, there are the problems of caretakers or baby-sitters for the young children of the family. The parents are forced to make a choice between nursery schools and inviting a trust worthy aged relative to live with them. But then, there is the problem of dementia, which is likely to strike the elderly at any time. There are also other negative aspects of ageing: (a) An ageist attitude to society. (b) Psychological issues of loneliness. (c) The oldest of the old are vulnerable to unforeseen health hazards. (d) They also have faith in doing "Nishkama Karma", and are likely to give, away any valuables to the poor and needy, in your absence from home.

In conclusion, Prof. Nair said that for every Indian the motto should be "to live and let live". Apart from living one's life in these hard times, it is important to be alive. There is a great need for "Corporate Spirituality." Everyone knows how Satyam Co. turned out to be a big "Asatya." Shri M.K. Kaw commented, at the end of the Lecture, the idea of propagating a community service, such as teaching the importance of human values, would be of immense benefit to one and all. Prof. B.B. Dhar, the President of KECSS, sounded off the meeting by moving a vote of thanks to Prof. K.R.G. Nair for his excellent lecture on a topic that was of great value to the members of the audience.

# The Maha Shivratri

By Amar Nath Bhan



Every Indian and those with Indian ancestral linkage knows about the famous Hindu festival of Shivratri called lovingly as Herath by its Kashmiri Pandit followers. It is my desire to let the members of the younger and future generations of our community know and remember this very important festival, its traditions, and what it means to the community as a whole.

Shivratri puja is performed as per ancient Hindu custom during the night. Praying to Lord Shiva cleans one's mind of evil thoughts. By fasting on the day of Shivratri and performing the puja with devotion including giving of alms to the poor, is said to be very auspicious for the person and his / her family.

There is an interesting story behind the famous *Vatak-Bhairvas puja* performed along with Shiv Puja. It is said that once Lord Shiva invited other gods (*Rudra Ganas*) to participate in a dance ritual held to the glory of the Lord. The *Rudra Ganas* came and started dancing and praying in the name of *Maha Shakti* (i.e. Shiva's consort Parvati the female energy of Shiva).

Watching this, a desire to dance with *Parvati* came into the mind of Lord Shiva but she was at that time away with her friends, dancing far away deep in a forest. Lord Shiva made himself into the shape of a huge and dreadful *Bhairva* and presented himself ferociously before the women folk deep in the woods. *Parvati* and her friends looked at the dreadful creature in the shape of a huge *Bhairva* and tried to look for help. Suddenly *Parvati* saw a large jar filled with water. By using her will-power she made the jar into a strong *Deva* that was followed by a number of similar *Devas* that started coming out of the jar, one after the other. The *Devas*, on orders from *Parvati* started challenging the ugly *Bhairva*. Seeing the sudden turn of events the ugly *Bhairva* took to his heels and left the ladies alone. *Parvati* was very pleased and called the *Devas* who saved her and her friends from the dreadful creature as *Vatak Bhairvas*, and blessed them by calling them as her own children. Further, she ordained that *Vatkas* will be worshipped alongside during the Shivaratri puja; and those who pray to the *Vatkas* with devotion, their wishes will be fulfilled. As a result Hindus worship the *Vatka* donning the face of a *Bhairva* during the Shivaratri puja. As far as my knowledge goes and from what I have

heard, Shiva has several *Bhairvas* at his command. It is also said that *Bhairvas* can be satisfied only by making a non-vegetarian offering to them.

I would like to mention here some names of the famous *Bhairva* temples that are/were located around and about the city of Srinagar in Kashmir Valley. I am not sure because of recent disturbances, whether they still exist. Nevertheless, remembering them will do justice to their glory.

*Shri Nanda-Kishore Bhairav* temple located on the banks of river Vitasta or Vyeth or Jehlum in the village of Sumbal, North of Srinagar.

*Shri Anand Kishore Bhairav* temple located in Maisuma Mohalla behind Dashname Akhada in the city of Srinagar.

*Shri Hatkeshur Bhairav* temple located at Malkah but was not in good shape even in those days when I was a boy due to extremist muslim graveyard and its influence in the area. As such it was under dispute at that time.

*Shri Vaital Bhairav* temple in Narsingh Garh colony near Batmalo in Srinagar.

*Shri Anand-e-shvar Bhairav* temple on the banks of the river Jehlum near Chattabal. This temple was under dispute with muslims. The temple was then under the control of the State government.

*Shri Sheetal Nath Bhairav* temple near Gaw Kadal, Srinagar.

*Shri Bhairav* temple at Rainawari in Ganju Mohalla.

*Shri Maha Kali Bhairav* on the banks of the river Jehlum near the mosque of Shah-Hamdan at Fateh Kadal, Srinagar.

I would like to give some details to my readers of how *Shivratri* was celebrated by our Kashmiri Pandit community in Kashmir, as I recall from my younger days. In those days *Shivratri* was of tremendous importance and a very auspicious time of year. It was celebrated with a great deal of reverence by the Pandit community. It was also an official holiday in the province of Jammu/Kashmir during the Dogra rule of the State. The festival would start a fortnight before *Shivratri* in the lunar period of *Phagun* (Hindu calendar) and starting on the very first day of the month of *Phagun* called *Ukdoh* of (*Hur Ukdoh*). I want to mention what *Hur* means in Kashmiri. *Hur* is a piece of cloth used in place of a brush to mud-wash the mud plastered walls of the houses in Kashmir. Usually a mixture of clay and water is used. Although people would also use white wash with lime, depending on what the individual could afford. The first date of the month of *Phagun* would be the start of the cleaning process and would include cleaning the whole house, utensils, clothes etc. Parents would take the children to the barber, who was usually a member of the Kashmiri Muslim community in Kashmir; and have their hair cut and make them look presentable. After the cleaning process was

completed, people would go out shopping. The cleaning period lasted from the first day (i.e. *Hur Ukadob*) up to the sixth day (which was called *Hur Shyam*).

The eighth day of the *Shivratri* celebrations (called *Hur Asthami*) was considered very auspicious and was the day for praying to *Mata Sharika Bhagnati* at her temple on the mighty *Hari Parbat* (God's Hill) situated on the North-east of the city of Srinagar. Early in the morning on this day devotees would walk on foot to the place and go around (*Parikrama*) the Hill. Some would stay overnight at the temple and do *bhajan* and *kirtan* collectively and individually, throughout the night. In addition to the above, devotees would also visit and pray in their nearest local temples. The celebrations on the eighth day were followed by *Narmi* and *Dashmi*.

The tenth day (*dashmi*) is called in Kashmiri *Dar Daehum*. In these two days (9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>) it was very common for the women folk to visit their homes on *Dashmi*. The women folk were handed some bread (from the bakery) and one bag of salt by their parents which they would later carry to their marital home, after bathing and cleaning themselves nicely in their parents home. This was the tradition and was dutifully obeyed by the ladies. For the newly weds, the bride would in addition bring along with them a new *Kangari*, an earthen ware pot which is made warm by charcoal inside it, new shoes (*chappals*), a new Sari, some money (called *Aatgath* or *Haath bhog*). The money was handed over to the parents-in-law as part of this custom and was not usually binding or a must for the brides parents. The baked bread was distributed among relatives and neighbours. Another item that the newly wedded bride would bring were sea shells (*har*). The shells form an important part of the *Shivratri* celebrations and are played with great enthusiasm by everybody, young or old. The bride would often distribute the shells in the family and play. In my younger days I recall how we all used to play with these shells and how much fighting amongst the young children there would be, associated with the win or loss of the shells. The game would usually bring a lot of noise, fun and laughter.

In the house, during these short dates and during the long wintry nights of the *Shivratri* festival, elders would usually feel much pleasure especially watching the children fight over the shells. It is hard for me to explain in words the euphoria that used to be generated amongst us all - young and old - during these games and during the *Shivratri* festival period. After the tenth day of the festival, came the eleventh day, most reverently called *Gada Kab*. The day, as the name implies was special for Pundits because fish (*gada*) used to be cooked in the traditional Kashmiri way on this way in bulk. The fish was supposed to be distributed amongst neighbours including members of the Muslim community, who would look forward to tasting the same with enthusiasm. At this point it may be interesting to note that Hindus in India celebrate *Shivratri* on *Shive-chaturdashi* (14th night) of the month of *Phagun* with a fast and eating vegetarian food. KPs now prefer cooking vegetarian food on *Shivratri* night.

The twelfth day of the celebration (*Wagari Bah*) was the day the head of the family, usually the male member, would head out for the market and purchase ingredients and things for *Puja Samagri*, including earthen pots of different sizes and shapes bought from the potter's shop, which were made especially for the occasion. The various shapes and sizes of the pottery had names like *Rishi Dul* (Big Pot), *Dulige*, *Nott*, *Saniwari*, *Wagur*, *Dupzoor*, *Sanipotul*, *Machwar*, *Toak* (plate), *Chong* (lamp) and so on. The earthen pots were made of special clay and were brought over to the house, being kept with great care and much reverence. Another earthen pot called adoringly by Kashmiris as *Lege* in which delicious Kashmiri fish was cooked, was also purchased for the occasion.

The place selected for the *Shivratri* puja was usually the family's prayer room (*Thokur Kuth*), an important and revered place in those days. The room was cleaned, washed and decorated for the occasion. On one side of the room things called *Vatake Samagri* made up of the above described things were set after cleaning and washing. On the thirteenth day, called *Treedashi*, the *Shivratri* puja night; *Ramgud*, *Wagur*, *Machavar* and *Nott* (earthen utensils) were filled with walnuts and fresh water and then placed at the designated *Shivratri* puja place. The pots with *Watuk* decorated with silver foils (known as *Ropp Warak*), *Nariwan*, *Sindur* and bouquets of flowers were placed over home made seats in a circular shape, called an *Aare* and made out of soft dry grass in the puja area. The *Ramgud*, *Dolig* and *Noat* were located in the back row and the others including *Sanipotul*, *Dupzor*, *Wagur* and *Machwar* were kept in the front row. The *Sanipotul*, as Lord Shiva Linga. The *Dupzoor* as *Parvati* and the *Wagur* as Sri Ganesh. Some families used brass pots instead of the more traditional earthenware pots. One earthen pot called a *Chong* was used as a lamp during the puja and was kept on the left side of the *Watuk*. The lamp made use of vegetable oil and twisted cotton wick called a *Soyath*. In addition a carpet was spread in front for devotees to perform the puja. Elders would fast for the day and not eat till the puja was over late in the night. All dishes prepared for the offering during Shiva puja were kept ready spread nicely in plates for the grand puja to start.



# SHUHUL TAAPH

## Launch



# SHUHUL TAAPH

## Posh-e-Varshun from The Camps



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**All Are Cordially Invited**

**18th April 2010**



**Venue : Pyare Lal Bhavan, Press Area, No. 2,  
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**Website : [www.athrott.org](http://www.athrott.org)**

## Inauguration of J N Kaul Memorial Hall





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**Dr. R N K BAMEZAI**  
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**Prof. B N KAUL**  
(Head - Ramakrishna Ashram, Srinagar)  
Special award for Spiritual Pursuits and Leadership

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