Parsi Tombstones from Burma

Between the early 1940s and 1995, the Parsi cemetery of Yangon (formerly Rangoon) was home to Zoroastrian Parsi graves from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Parsi community of Rangoon was too small to support the construction and maintenance of Towers of Silence (dakhma). Under such circumstances, the Zoroastrian purity law permitted bodies to be buried instead of being exposed to vultures in the Towers. Parsi cemeteries developed across Eurasia where there were some, but not many, Parsis. I describe a few of these graveyards here: http://www.cambridgeblog.org/2014/05/death-and-legal-history-on-sunday-afternoons/

The old Rangoon Parsi burial site was located at Bo Min Yaung Street in Mingalar Taung Nyunt Township, Myanmar (formerly Burma). In 1995, the cemetery was moved on short notice to the Yay Way Parsi Burial Ground in North Okkapala, outside of Yangon. Parsi community members saved and moved some of the tombstones listed below but were unable to preserve or transfer any human remains. They created the list that follows. I am grateful to them for sharing it with me.

Square brackets indicate illegible text or probable spelling errors in the original list. My editorial notes appear in italics and in footnotes. An asterix (*) indicates that a photo exists of the entry’s tombstone.

I thank Eileen Dorfman for her help in preparing this list. I would also like to acknowledge Donald M. Stadtner for his interest in preserving what remains of these Parsi tombstones.

Untitled List of Rangoon Parsi Tombstones

1. Fran Roeznavrojwnvala.
2. Marckji1 Palanji Daruvala.  
   Born 5.8.1919.  
   Died 29.11.1288 Jejdejerdy2.
3. Dr. D.N. Dantra M. Rom.  
   Born 22.8.1866.  
   Died 22.10.1920. R.G.N.
   Died 8.1.1920. (1.5.1290)  
   Aged 33.
5. ..............................

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1 This name should probably be Maneckji (=Maneckji Palanji Daruvala).
2 This word should be Yezdezardi (=1288 Yezdezardi).
3 The second name should be spelled Jamshed (=Reraja Jamshed Bharda).
7. ..............................................................
8. Well .......... [ ]
9. Rustomje.
   Died 16.8.1921.
   Aged 66.
10. Cooverbai Hormasjee Postwalle⁴
    Died 20.12.1921.
11. ..............................
12. Aimai Dorabji Tambali
    Born 26.4.1922
    Died 27.12.1922. (19.4.1292)
13. Saporjee Cowasjee Captain.
    Born 6.8.1850.
    Died 4.7.1923.
14. Meherbai Darabje⁵ Tambali.
    Born 12.3.1892.
    Died 6.8.1924.
15. Sorabji Eursetji Eukhia⁶.
    Died 22.6.1926. (17.10.1295 A.Y)
16. .................................
17. Dr. Janshed Ji⁷ Hormasji.
    Born 17.5.1873.
    Died 24.7.1939. Rangoon.
18. Russie
    Born 1913
    Died 1927.
    Died 17.2.1931. A.D.
    (Died Roj 13.6.1300)
    Born 21.11.1890.
21. .................................
22. Sarab⁹ Burjorjee Unwala.
    Died 7.12.1929.
    Age 17 (Died Roj 1.4.1299 Y.D)

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⁴ In India and elsewhere, this name would probably be spelled Postwalla (=Cooverbai Hormasjee Postwalla).
⁵ This name should probably be Dorabjee or Dorabji (=Meherbai Dorabjee Tambali).
⁶ These last two names should be Cursetji Sukhia (=Sorabji Cursetji Sukhia).
⁷ This name should be Jamshedjee or Jamshedji (=Jamshedji Hormasji).
⁸ This name is probably Saporjee or Sapurji. The second name is usually Maneckji, and the surname is typically Ghadiali. (=Sapurji Maneckji Ghadiali)
⁹ This name would normally be spelled Sohrab or Sorab (=Sohrab Burjorjee Unwala).
23. Jenshedji Burjoiiji\textsuperscript{10} Sutaria.
   Died 12.9.1933.
   Age 63. (Died Roj. 6.1.1303 Y.D)
24. Nowrajee\textsuperscript{11} Rustomjee Burjorjee.
   Died 11.5.1986.
25. Bai Butchoobai Cowasjee Captain.
   Died 21.4.1906.
   Age 72.
26. Meruanjee\textsuperscript{12} Cowasjee Captain.
   Born 24.5.1844
27. *In Loving Memory of
   Bai Soonabai Dhunjibhoy Divecha.
   [...............................]
   Daughter of
   [--------] Merwanjee Cowasjee Captain
   Died 28.10.1935.
   [..............................]
28. Kalkha S.R.O. Burjorjee\textsuperscript{13}.
   Died 16.6.1939.
29. Balehunbai Dunshow Burjarjee\textsuperscript{14}
   Born 13.3.1859.
   Died 25.4.1935.
30. ............................................
   Born 20.1.1924.
   Died 17.2.1924.
32. Peroze Dunshaw Burjarjee.\textsuperscript{15}
33. Rustomjee Nowrojee Burjarjee.
   Died 24.10.1918.
   Aged 42.
34. Perrin Rustomjee Burjorjee
   Died 13.2.1942.
   Aged 63.
35. Golnar D. Metha.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{10} This name should be Jamshedji Burjorji (=Jamsjedji Burjorji Sutaria).
\textsuperscript{11} This name would normally be spelled Nowrojee, Nowroji or Naoroji (=Nowrojee Rustomjee Burjorjee).
\textsuperscript{12} This name should be spelled Merwanjee (=Merwanjee Cowasjee Captain).
\textsuperscript{13} This family name should be spelled Burjorjee or possibly Burjarjee (=Kalkha S. R. O. Burjorjee).
\textsuperscript{14} This name should be spelled Dinshaw, Dinshah or Dinha, and the family name was usually Burjorjee (=Bulehunbai Dinshaw Burjorjee).
\textsuperscript{15} This name would usually be spelled Dinshaw, and the family name would usually be Burjorjee (=Peroze Dinshaw Burjorjee).
Born 14.1.1880.
Died 16.8.1937.
37. Banoomani Daceba Mehta.
    Born 18.12.1912.
    Died 19.8.1930.
38. Kharshed Bai Curset Jee Limjee[18].
    Died 28.10.1929.
    Aged 53.
39. Cursed Ulculji Limjee[19].
40. Mehruol-Limje.
41. Mrs. Banoobai Nourojee Burjarjee.
    Died 12.2.1910.
    Aged 57.
Or [full text from image of tombstone]:
*In Memory
of my
Everloving self-sacrificing
pious noble
and well-advising
Mother Mrs. Banoobai
Nowrojee Burjorjee
Died on [12] February 1910
42. ...........................................
43. Virbarjee Burjorjee[20].
    Died 10.8.1921.
44. Perozebai Pallunjee.
    Died 4.9.1914.
    Aged 58.
45. Avanbai Nusserwanjee
    Died 20.9.1940.
    Aged 78.
46. ...........................................
47. Bajonjee Cowasjee Khun Bate.
    Died 25.10.1876.
    Aged 62.
48. ...........................................
49. Noorojee Burjorjee.

[16] This surname would normally be spelled Mehta (=Golnar D. Mehta).
[17] This name should probably be Burjorjee (=McBace] Burjorjee Dhikhajee Unwala).
[18] In India and elsewhere, this name would be spelled Kharshedbai Cursetjee Limjee.
[19] This surname should probably be Limjee (=Cursed Ulculji Limjee).
[20] This surname should be Burjorjee (=Virbarjee Burjorjee).
Died 10.10.1900.
Aged 59.
Died 15.1.1908.
Aged 61.
52. Almai Burjorjee Burjorjee. Died 7.4.1939.
Aged 57.
Died 8.1.1967
Aged 74.
Aged 71.
Aged 55.
56. ........................................................ .
57. Nusserwanji Merwanjee.
   Aged 40.
   Aged 16.
   Aged 75.
   ...................................................... .

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21 This name should probably be Pesi Dorab Saklat.
22 This name should probably read Rustom Dorab Saklat.
23 This surname was probably Saklat (=Dorabjee Rustomjee Saklat).
24 This surname was probably Saklat (=Tehmina Dorabjee Saklat).
25 This second name was probably Merwanjee. On other tombstones in this collection, the surname appears as Motivindhara (=Nusserwanji Merwanjee Motivindhara).
26 This surname was probably Ghandy (=Cowasjee Muncherjee Ghandy). This entry thus appears to have the same name as the previous one, although the dates are different.
27 This second name should be Muncherjee (=Cowasjee Muncherjee Ghandy). This entry thus appears to have the same name as the previous one, although the dates are different.
28 This second name should probably be Kaikasru or Kaikhusroo (=Bachubai Kaikhasru [Merhmwala]).
62. ........................................... .
63. Aroeshir29 Byramji Mehta
    Died 15.1.1932.
    Aged 57.
64. Nanabhay Nawrojee Burjorjee.
    Born 8.11.1870.
    Died 18.5.1937.
65. Mrs. Peroja Nanabhoy Burjarjee.30
    Born 17.12.1881.
    Died 12.4.1958.
66. Behram Nanabhoy Burjarjee.31
    Born 9.7.1899.
    Died 22.3.
67. ........................................... .
68. Fram Nanbhoy32 Burjorjee.
    Born 27.3.1898.
    Died 1.8.1948.
69. Pestonji Bur Jarji Chenoy
    Born 17.4.1885.
    Died 25.11.1940.
70. Dr. Bhumar N. Burjorjee.
    Died 26.7.1962.
    Aged 75.
71. Pastonjee.
72. Vakil.
73. Rustom Sorah33 [Danlra].
    Born 17.6.1872.
    Died 10.12.1930.
74. Avabai-Dr. N.N. Parkh34.
    Died 25.6.1917.
75. ........................................... .
76. Jemshed Jee35 Hirjee Hirjee.
    Born 5.3.1896.
77. ........................................... .
78. Mrs. Manckbai-Munchersa
    Dorabjiwalia36 (Mandalay)

29 This first name should be Ardeshir (=Ardeshir Byramji Mehta).
30 This surname was probably spelled Burjorjee (=Mrs. Peroja Nanabhoy Burjorjee).
31 This surname was probably spelled Burjorjee (=Behram Nanabhoy Burjorjee).
32 This name was usually spelled Nanabhoy (=Fram Nanabhoy Burjorjee).
33 This name should be Sorab or Sohrab (=Rustom Sorab [Danlra]).
34 This surname should be Parekh (=Avabai-Dr. N. N. Parekh).
35 This name would normally be spelled Jamshedjee or Jamshedji (=Jamshedjee Hirjee Hirjee).
36 A more standard spelling for this name would be Maneckbai Munchershia Dorabjiwala.
79. Jemshed N. Burjarjee\textsuperscript{37}.
   Born 11.2.1913.
   Died 17.9.1949.
80. Baigoolhai\textsuperscript{38} [Areeshis] Ginwalla
   Age 98.
   Died 12.7.1946.
81. Narjis
   Born 29.3.1910.
   Died 5.5.1932.
82. Kaikhusroo Nowrojee.
   Born 16.10.1864.
   Died 13.4.1940.
83. Khorshed Darosha Daruvala.
   Died 12.8.1944.
84. Dr. N.N. Paral\textsuperscript{39}.
   Born 2.11.1853.
   Died 26.6.1935.
85. Bai Meherbai Saporjee Cowasjee\textsuperscript{40}.
   Born 6.11.1857
   Died 2.11.1933.
86. Eruchsha Sorabjee\textsuperscript{41} Surty.
   Died 15.7.1925.
87. .........................................
88. .........................................
89. Ardeshir Manickji Fitter
   Died 24.3.1310. Y.Z.
90. Darush – N. Daruvala.
   Born 11.5.1899.
   Died 13.4.1947.
91. Jemshed Nonrojee\textsuperscript{42} Batliwala.
   Born 12.3.1885.
92. Jehavgr\textsuperscript{43}.
   Born 20.10.1888.
   Died 30.6.1959.
93. Burjor Hormasji Dastor\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{37} This first name was also spelled Jamshed. The surname was also spelled Burjorjee (=Jamshed N. Burjorjee).
\textsuperscript{38} This name was probably Bai Goolbai. The second name may have been Ardeshir (=Bai Goolbai Ardeshir Ginwalla).
\textsuperscript{39} This surname may have been Patel (=Dr. N. N. Patel).
\textsuperscript{40} In India and elsewhere, this surname would have been spelled Cowasjee (=Bai Meherbai Saporjee Cowasjee).
\textsuperscript{41} This name should be Sorabjee or Sorabji (=Eruchsha Sorabjee Surty).
\textsuperscript{42} This name should probably be Jamshed Nowrojee (=Jamshed Nowrojee Batliwala).
\textsuperscript{43} This name should be Jehangir.
94. Ketik Vesuna.
Born 22.12.1915.
Died 2.6.1953.

95. Hormasji Burjorji Rustomji Cooper.
Born 6.1.1900.
Died 30.6.1941.

96. Khurshed M. Setna
Died 29.8.1936.
Aged 42.

97. [Baileachoobai] Cowasjee Mistry
Died Roj 28.4.1299 Y.D.
Date 3.1.1930 A.D.

98. Pirojban Pallanjo\(^{45}\) Mistry
Died Roj 7.12.1299
D.T 11.8.1924

99. Feroz J. Hormasji.
Died 4.8.1915.
Aged 16.

100. .......................... 

101. ..........................

102. Aimai and Jivanji Harmasji\(^{46}\)
Died 4.3.1905.
Aged 6 months 15 days.

103. Jalsorabjee\(^{47}\) Kapadia.
Aged 70.

104. Maneck Dinswaw Borjarjee\(^{48}\).
Born 23.7.1893.

105. Cowasjee Merwanjee Cowasjee
Born 24.7.1873.
Died 5.3.1935.

106. Kaikhusnoo\(^{49}\) Jiwajee Parter
Born 24.12.1895.

\(^{44}\) This surname would normally be spelled Dastur or Dastoor (=Burjor Hormasji Dastur).

\(^{45}\) This first name should be Pirojbai. The second name would normally be Pallonji or Pallonjee (=Pirojbai Pallonji Mistry).

\(^{46}\) This name would normally be spelled Hormasji or Hormusji (=Aimai and Jivanji Hormasji).

\(^{47}\) This name should be Jal Sorabjee (=Jal Sorabjee Kapadia).

\(^{48}\) This second name should be Dinshaw. The surname was also spelled Burjorjee (=Maneck Dinshaw Burjorjee).

\(^{49}\) This name should be Kaikhusroo (=Kaikhusroo Jiwajee Parter).
107. Hommabai and Ji Ji Bhyo.\textsuperscript{50} N. Sorty
   Born 23.11.1937.
   Died 3.3.1939.
108. Parling Peroza and Ji ji Bhyo
   Nowrojee Surty.
   Born 18.8.1906.
   Died 11.10.1906.
109. [Seronebaj] and Nana Bhyo Morwanjee
   Died 5.4.1916
   Aged 10 months.
110. Coomerbai Coorset Jee Bhar Rucha\textsuperscript{51}
   Born 23.1.1861.
   Died 9.1.1938.
111. Mr. P.D. Patel.
   Born 14.10.1874.
112. P.K. Bomanjee.
   Died 15.3.1936.
113. ....................................
114. ....................................
115. K.B.J. Hagani
116. Bhicajee Behrmjee\textsuperscript{52} Bharda
   Born 4.11.1237.
   Died 17.5.1305.
117. Ruttonshaw A. Si Ganporia\textsuperscript{53}
   Born 12.2.1875.
   Died 18.8.1935.
118. Mr. Edulji Bomanji
   Born 7.11.1908.
   Died 22.12.1934.
119. ....................................
120. *Darrabhai Menwanji\textsuperscript{54} Driver
   Died 10.11.1903.
   Aged 76.
121. ....................................
122. Cowas Masani.
   Born 3.7.1902.

\textsuperscript{50} In India and elsewhere, Ji Ji Bhyo would be spelled as a single word: Jeejeebhoi or Jijibhai (=Jijibhoy Nowrojee Surty)
\textsuperscript{51} In India and elsewhere, this name would be written Coorsetjee (or Cursetjee) Bharucha. It is also possible that Coomerbai should be Cooverbai (=Cooverbai Cursetjee Bharucha).
\textsuperscript{52} This name should be Behramjee (=Bhicajee Behramjee Bharda).
\textsuperscript{53} This surname would normally be written Siganporia (=Ruttonshaw A. Siganporia).
\textsuperscript{54} This name should be Merwanji (=Darrabhai Merwanji Driver).

123. .................................. 

124. Pestonji. 
Died 23.4.1903. 
10 Months 15 Days. 

125. .................................. 

126. .................................. 

127. .................................. 

128. Mrs. A.B. Masani 
Born 12.7. 
Died 13.10. 

129. Shireenbai Ardshir\(^{55}\) Masani 
Aged 65. 

130. Burjarjee Pestonjee Mekta\(^{56}\) 
Died 23.2.1905. 
Aged 36. 

131. .................................. 

132. Nowroji-Jamasj\(^{57}\) Patel 
Died 18.8.1908. 
Aged 60. 

133. Shireen 
Died 4.8.1907. 
Aged 21. 

134. Bhikhaji Burjorji Randeria\(^{58}\) 

135. .................................. 

Born 16.4. 
Died 5.6. 

137. Baby Minu. 
Born 8.11.1917. 
Died 13.6.1919. 

138. .................................. 

139. Parviz R. Driver 
Died 19.6.1935. 

140. Parviz. R. Driver\(^{59}\) 
Died 8.7.1936. 

141. Rostom Bamonjee 
Born 19.12.1903. 

\(^{55}\) This name should be Ardeshir (=Shireenbai Ardeshir Masani). 
\(^{56}\) This surname was probably Mehta (=Burjarjee Pestonjee Mehta). 
\(^{57}\) Jamasj should be Jamaspji (=Nowroji Jamaspji Patel). 
\(^{58}\) This name should read Bhikhaji Burjorji Randeria. 
\(^{59}\) This entry appears to share the same name as the previous one, although the death dates differ by a year.
Died 8.4.1953.
142. Minnie Harmusjee\textsuperscript{60}.
   Born 11.8.1891.
143. Doctor Gool.
   Died 2.8.1948.
   Aged 55.
144. Dadabhoy Harmusjee\textsuperscript{61}.
   Died 3.9.1943
   Aged 73.
145. Munchishaw Maneekjee\textsuperscript{62}.
   Died 2.6.1957.
   Aged 81.
146. Maneakjee\textsuperscript{63} Chika Ghadiali
   Died 29.2.1936.
   Aged 71.
147. Janshed\textsuperscript{64}.
   Died 25.3.1925.
   Aged 36.
148. Dinshaw Hormusjee.
   Born 25.9.1866.
   Aged 67.
149. Bomanji Nowroji Patel.
   Born 19.8.1878.
   Died 13.9.1925.
150. ............................
151. Dinabai\textsuperscript{65}.
   Died 19.6.1913.
   Aged 19.
152. Shiribbai Fakirji S.
   Sumarivala
   Died 22.3.1913.
   Aged 22.
153. Hormusjee Furdoonjee.
   Died 26.1.1909.
   Aged 82.
   Died 13.8.1912.
   Aged 39.

\textsuperscript{60} This second name could also be spelled Hormusjee (=Minni Hormusjee).
\textsuperscript{61} This second name could also be spelled Hormusjee (=Dadabhoy Hormusjee).
\textsuperscript{62} This second name should be Maneckjee (=Munchishaw Maneckjee).
\textsuperscript{63} This first name should be Maneckjee (=Maneckjee Chika Ghadiali).
\textsuperscript{64} Janshed should be Jamshed.
\textsuperscript{65} Dinabai should be Dinbai.
155. Dr. Ardeshir Byramji Masani.
   Born 21.6.1862.
   Died 29.10.1912.

156. Piroja
   Died 3.3.1913.
   Aged 21.

157. Mrs. Pirojbai Jardomji Patel
   Died 25.7.1913.
   Aged 16.

158. Mecherbai Fardoonj Vaid
   Born 18.7.1874.
   Died 22.11.1913.

159. Ruttonba
   Died 3.7.1915.
   Aged 48.

160. Savaksha Sorabji Dhondi
   Died 15.6.1924.

**Additions from photographs taken by Mitra Sharafi (2007):**

161. *[In Loving] Memory of Our Beloved
   Hormusjee [D]adabhoy Hormusjee
   [---] [September] 1891
   [---] February 1978
   [---] 82 years

162. *In loving memory of
   Manekji Palanji
   Daruvala
   (Wakemavala)
   Died [Roj] 29-11-1288 Yezdezerdy
   Date 5th August 1919

162. *In memory of
   Pestonji Burjorji Chinoy
   Born 17th April 1885
   Died [5th] November 1940

163. *Sacred to the memory of
   Nusserwanji Merwanji Motivindhara
   Died 18th December 1900
   Aged 40 Years

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66 The first two names here should be Meherbai Fardoonji (=Meherbai Fardoonji Vaid).
67 Ruttonba should probably be Ruttonbai.
164. *In Memory of
Goolnar D. Metha
Born 14-1-1880
Died on 16-8-37

165. *To the Sacred Memory of
Sorabji Cursetji Sukhia
Died Roj 17-10-1295 A. Y.
Dt 22-6-1926 A.D.

166. *In Sacred and Loving Memory of [Our]
Doctor Gool
Daughter of Dadabhoy Horm[---]
Who departed her most noble [---]
On 2nd August 1948
Aged 55 Years

167. *In Loving Memory of
Framroze
Jee Jee Bhoj
Age [48] years
Died on 31 August 1996
R. I. P.
[The body of F. Jee Jee Bhoj is buried in the new Parsi cemetery in North Okkapala.]

(version updated on 8 December 2014)

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68 In India and elsewhere, this surname would be spelled Mehta (=Goolnar D. Mehta).
69 In India and elsewhere, Jee Jee Bhoj would be spelled Jeejeebhoy. It was probably separated in Myanmar (or Burma) to conform to three-part Burmese naming conventions.