

Inauguration of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Memorial Museum, Navsari

(Report by Marzban Jamshedji Giara)

Besides the Atash Behram, First Dastur Meherjirana Library and Jamshed Baug, Navsari now has one more landmark to be proud of. Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Memorial Museum was inaugurated on Sunday October 19, 2008 Roz Bahman, Mah Khordad 1378 Yezdezerdi by Vada Dasturji Meherjirana after a jashan ceremony. Present on the occasion were Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy , 8th Baronet, trustees of Sir J.J. Charity Fund and Sir J.J. Parsee Benevolent Institution, trustees of Surat Parsee Panchayat and principals and staff of Sir J.J. and R.J.J. Schools at Navsari..

Vada Dasturji Meherjirana lauded Sir Jamsetjee's philanthropy and services to his community and country and to humanity at large. He suggested that a lesson on the life and noble deeds of Sir Jamsetjee be included by the Dept. of Education, Government of Gujarat in school textbooks so that the present youths get an opportunity to know about Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy. This Museum will serve as an inspiration to all who visit it to emulate his example.

The present Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy in his speech said: "The purpose of converting Sir J.J.'s birthplace into a memorial museum is to showcase the contribution made by one man in the fields of philanthropy, education, healthcare, women's education and community service. This museum aims to enthuse our youths about the ideals set by Sir Jamsetjee. It portrays his world of adversity, adventure and accomplishment. His vision was as large as his generosity."

The ancestral home where Sir Jamsetjee was born in 1783 has been renovated and transformed into a Memorial Museum to commemorate his 225th birth anniversary. This project has been undertaken by Sir J. J. Charity Fund and Sir J. J. Parsee Benevolent Institution. The research, concept and curation has been carried out by the team of Mrs. Homai N. Modi, Dr. Homi B. Dhalla and Mr. Jamshed A. Bhiwandiwalla. All three of them were also present and felicitated at this function. Girls of Seth RJJ School, Navsari presented a garba recital specially composed for the occasion titled "*Jamshed Jejee taro danko vaghe gher gher*". The inaugural function was ably compered by Ms. Pouruchisti Kadodwalla, Head Mistress, Sir J.J. Primary School, Navsari.

Mr. Homi D. Mehta, a trustee of Sir JJ Parsee Benevolent Institution while proposing the vote of thanks stated that Navsari is also the birthplace of Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji, the grand old man of India and Jamsetjee Nusserwanji Tata, the father of Indian industry. The houses in which they were born still exist at Navsari. He suggested that these heritage houses could also be converted into memorial museums so that future generations would be inspired by their noble lives.

This Museum is located at Vatcha Mohalla at Malesar in Navsari. It is a 5 minute walk from Ava Baug Bus Stand and Jamshed Baug and 10 minute rickshaw ride from Navsari station and Atash Behram. Information in the Museum is available in English and in Gujarati. Entry into the Museum is by prior appointment only. The Museum can be visited from Monday to Saturday between 10.30 a.m. and 5 p.m. For an appointment please call Mr. Jehanbux Kodia, Manager, (Off: (02637) 235099 Mobile: 98797 35551) during normal working hours. The Museum is closed on Sundays. Admission to the Museum is free.