



## The Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals

### The Shap Working Party Calendar Editorial Notes: 1972 – 2018

Paragraphs from the Introduction to *Education for a Multi-Cultural Society: World Religions – Aids for Teachers*, Edited by Peter Woodward (CRC; January, 1972. p5)

The teacher in this country who wishes to present information about the World's Religions is in some ways like the mariner of mythology, steering an uncertain course between the Scylla of "too much too soon" and the Charybdis of "too little too late". His route between the many-headed monster and the yawning whirlpool is uncharted and indistinct.

Certainly there is much in the subject material of World Religions to help him find his "true mean". Buddhism teaches a doctrine of the Middle Way; Islam instructs that the Qur'ān should be read in neither too loud nor too soft a voice; and the religion of the followers of Zoroaster encourages moderation in all things.

On the other hand religions have a reputation for producing a devotion to their several causes that verges on the fanatical. The search for truth has often in the past led to extremism, and martyrdom and violence have much too common. Even today the contribution of the study of World Religions to inter-racial and international harmony is only struggling up the first step of a steep and rocky pilgrimage.

In this situation the teacher stands, like the mariner, in need of all the help and guidance he can find. This article, along with the rest of the booklet, is an attempt to provide some initial outline of where the teacher may turn in his search for the material, methods and aids to inspire his teaching ...

The reader who wishes to indulge in some such process of self-examination may well find the Calendar of Festivals proves of help to him. The situations where he draws on it will, of course, vary considerably. Some schools will approach it as a feature of Assembly; others may draw on it for classroom purposes, as providing illustrative material for lessons; others still may incorporate it as a source of project material, or use it as a basis for thematic study. In each case it can be a profitable exercise for the teacher to ask himself why he is using it in his particular way, and what are his motives in so doing. Festivals quickly lose their original simplicity and vigour, they tend to



become allegory instead of parable, but the search for the original can often turn a fascinating window on the world into a reflective mirror of the Self. I hope some teachers will find the Calendar helpful in this way too.

*(NB The early Shap productions from Borough Road College included the Calendar as part of a larger package, and so the Calendar had no separate editorial. The above paragraph was repeated in each edition of these productions until Desmond Brennan took over the editorship of the Calendar in 1976 and instituted a Calendar specific Editorial.)*

The key editorial role for the Shap Calendar has been held by four members of the Working Party, Peter **Woodward** (in three installments, 1969-1975, 1986-2005, 2009-2015), Desmond **Brennan** (1976-1982), Clive **Lawton** (1983-1995) and Roger **Howarth** (2006-2008), together with notable help from some nine other members in important supportive roles.

*All material compiled by Peter Woodward from materials held in the Shap Archive and elsewhere.*

*February, 2017.*



**1976**

## **EDITOR'S NOTE**

The World Religions Calendar of Festivals has now appeared annually since 1970. Over the period it has been structured to coincide with the normal sequence of events from January to December. It was recently decided to alter this format in order to coincide more specifically with the traditional academic year, but with the intention of publishing in early July in order to assist teachers and others to plan ahead for the Autumn Term onwards.

This arrangement has presented considerable problems affecting in particular the information of dates relating moveable feasts in the Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist traditions. The reasons for this is simply that here we are dealing with festivals, the exact day of which is determined by lunar sightings. Because of this difficulty, therefore, a few omissions (indicated by an asterisk) have had to be made, but hopefully these relevant dates will be made available in due course.

Apart from this, the purpose of the calendar remains as before in that it is intended primarily for those involved in education – although increasingly benefit has also been derived by people in industry, the social services and the mass media, to mention but a few. In addition to the desire to know the date of an actual festival, it has also been found useful to be aware that religious adherents may desire some special concessions or leave of absence to observe appropriate traditional celebrations on certain days.

As readers can imagine, the compilation and editing of this manual is a somewhat complex matter especially, as I have already indicated, in ascertaining with accuracy the variations of 'movable feasts'. I am deeply indebted to our many associates who represent major World Faiths, for their painstaking efforts in furnishing relevant details at short notice, and to my secretary for her collation of their contributions.

Should anyone wish to submit comments for the future improvement of this calendar, they are invited to forward such observations to me in writing at the earliest opportunity.

## **CONTRIBUTORS**

Rev J Austin	-	Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist
Mr D F Brennan	-	Christian
Br Veda Chaitanya	-	Hindu
Rabbi D Charing	-	Jewish



Mrs Conte-Helm	-	Japanese
Mr R el Droubie	-	Muslim
Mr P Hainsworth	-	Baha'i
Mr D Man-tin	-	Chinese
Mr C P Mehta	-	Zoroastrian
Dr Sharma	-	Hindu
Prof H Singh	-	Sikh

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## 1977 SHAP MAILING

### Calendar of Religious Festivals

#### COPYRIGHT

#### Editor's Note

It gives me pleasure to introduce this eighth edition of the Calendar of Religious Festivals. Although the annual task of adapting material is exacting, one marvels at the speed with which the yearly cycle brings us round to the deadline for the next production. As will be apparent, we continue the format whereby the sequence of dates has been arranged to coincide specifically with the pattern of the academic year — an innovation, which already seems to have won the approval of our readers.

The prevailing problem still applies affecting information relating to moveable feasts which are determined by lunar sightings. The religious traditions affected in this way — Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism - have for the most part been covered, but in the case of any doubt the omission is indicated by an asterisk.

In response to a number of letters from various Sources, it has been decided to augment the details describing Christian festivals — the point being taken that, although we are dealing here with the religious 'host culture' in Britain, the need for such information cannot be overlooked. At any rate one hopes the selection of Christian festivals will prove acceptable while recognising the impossibility of including all the religious customs which obtain particularly in minority denominations.

As regards the application of the Calendar to various situations, one can only repeat that increasingly it appears to be relevant to teachers in particular and more widely to agencies devoted to community development and the 'caring' ministries. Following in the wake of the great Debate on Education and the Potentiality for dialogue between those engaged in the classroom and in industry, the relevance of the observance of major celebrations and attendant religious practices may be apparent to Personnel Officers as well.

The considerable contribution made by the Community Relations Commission over the years in fostering a more congenial climate for multicultural understanding in this country, will be appreciated by many of our readers. It is with sadness that we must record the demise of this Body, which has assisted us in so many ways with previous publication of the Calendar.



In conclusion I should also like to express appreciation to our contributors who have made painstaking efforts to furnish us with details concerning moveable feasts associated with the faiths they represent. Without their continued assistance and advice and the outstanding task of collating material undertaken by my secretary, the production of the Calendar would not be possible.

Desmond F. Brennan (Editor)



1978

Editorial Missing



1979

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Calendars particularly those relating to religious festivals — are very much a reflection of the natural urge to discover patterns within the world of which one is a part. Certainly the major religions have throughout man's history provided a major focus for such patterning which in turn enables the individual to relate to the rhythms of the seasons and of the human life cycle. Circumscribed as we are by the elements of the spatial and the temporal — festivals can assist us in 'making sense of time' while discerning the high moments of the yearly round.

As we put the finishing touches to this version of the Calendar, it is hard to believe that this constitutes the tenth edition — something of a milestone as the first decade is reached. Preparing a calendar for publication is an odd experience, since it has to do with the death of one 'year' and the birth of another — even though at the time of writing we are still in May! This may explain why yet again it has been difficult to ascertain all the precise dates of Asian religions before we go to press. Only in August are the 'cognoscenti' likely to fore-gather in India to determine when certain lunar festivals will occur in 1980.

Despite these technical problems it is encouraging to report how much the Calendar is appreciated, not only by teachers, for whom it was primarily intended (hence the time-span coinciding with the school year) but also by those engaged in such pursuits as the mass media, nursing, catering, social services and even the police force! The Calendar assists people in the sphere of work to tailor their programmes according to the festive occasions and for those with management responsibilities, to determine how to allocate judiciously 'time off' so that adherents of a particular faith can fulfil traditional observances in due season.

We are deeply grateful as ever for the letters and recommendations which have reached us from correspondents suggesting improvements on the information pertaining to relevant festivals. In this way the Calendar grows and is refined with each new edition. For instance, it has been pointed out that the prefix 'Chinese' before certain oriental celebrations could be misconstrued as if such traditions were still flourishing in China itself. It remains to be seen how things will develop there now that a new regime has come to power. Suffice it to say that 'Chinese' merely refers to the origin of the festival while allowing for the fact that Hong Kong, Taiwan or Malaya may be the more likely reference point for contemporary consideration.

In conclusion I should like to place on record my appreciation to the various contributors who have made painstaking efforts to supply details concerning moveable feasts associated with the faiths they personally represent. Without their continual assistance



and advice and the sustained interest of our general readership, the Calendar could not fittingly be updated in more senses than one.

Last, but by no means least, I should like to thank my personal assistant, Mrs R. Paternoster, for her out-standing and conscientious work in collating all the material. In this way we try to ensure that this manuscript meets the ever pressing deadline for publication so that the Tenth Anniversary Calendar reaches you in good time.

Should anyone wish to submit comments for the future improvement of this Calendar, they are invited to forward such observations to me in writing at the earliest opportunity.

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#### CONTRIBUTORS

- |                  |   |                                 |
|------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Rev. J. Austin   | - | Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist |
| - Jain           |   |                                 |
| Mr D.F. Brennan  | - | Christian                       |
| Rabbi D. Charing | - | Jewish                          |
| Mr AS. Chhatwal  | - | Sikh                            |
| Mrs Conte-Helm   | - | Japanese                        |
| Mr R. El Droubie | - | Muslim                          |
| Mr P. Hainsworth | - | Baha'i                          |
| Mr C.P. Mehta    | - | Zoroastrian                     |
| Mr C.H. Poon}    |   |                                 |
| Mr D. Jones }    | - | Chinese                         |
| Mr Solariki      | - | Hindu                           |



1980

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Readers who have used the annual Calendar of Religious Festivals over the years will be familiar with the purpose and format of the publication and how it has evolved during the last decade. Quite obviously the initial intention was to cater for the growing interest in the teaching of world religions as well as to familiarize teachers with the religious traditions and customs in an ever increasing multicultural society. The calendar has therefore served to complement R.E. syllabuses, the planning of assemblies in due season, and to indicate the pattern of major observances which might occasion leave of absence from school or work as occasion demands.

The inclusion of Christian festivals has been slightly augmented in the recent past since it cannot be assumed that their significance would readily be recognised even among those who might loosely be called Christian. Additionally, it seems desirable that those who are less familiar with the host community's religious culture should avail of the opportunity to glean a little of the relevant background — however brief the description in this manual. A growing mutual appreciation may in turn lead to a consideration of the possible interconnection (whether on the basis of similarities or contrasts) between the various festivals. Such an approach may have a bearing on the framework of the seasons in nature, the human life cycle or the spectrum of major belief systems.

One of the most delicate, if not problematic, issues arising from religious celebrations stemming from a variety of traditions and cultures, is the question of being granted leave of absence from school or work. As far as Christianity is concerned, most of the important feast days coincide with public holidays — and indication of the way in which the salient religious culture has become an integral part of British society. Exceptions arise in the case of Roman Catholics who have additional (week) 'days of obligation', although most adherents in these instances attend worship before or after their normal daily commitments.

Adherents of non-Christian faiths need to work out an acceptable pattern of observance which usually involves a realistic and judicious arrangement with L.E.A.s and other responsible Bodies. In some cases, minority religious communities, i.e. Buddhists — defer the corporate celebration to the weekend closest to the actual festival date. In other traditions, observance of the precise date is 'de rigeur' and often involves services of worship throughout the entire day(s). An attempt has been made to indicate the festivals of major importance by the inclusion of \*\* when appropriate throughout the calendar. One only hopes that a fair and sympathetic solution can be worked out on this matter which has occasioned some contentious publicity in the press during the last year.



As ever the Editor would like to acknowledge the assistance afforded by a number of consultants who faithfully offer advice on moveable dates as they occur annually. Additionally, note has been taken of a fair range of conscientious correspondence from several sources which has enabled us to make suitable adaptation to the text of the previous calendar. With the increasing pressure of personnel and finance in education, it

may be necessary to make a radical decision to rationalise the production of this publication in the future.

The solution may lie in the direction of furnishing an informative manual on festivals which would have some perennial relevance, over a span of several years, while periodic supplements would cater for the annual contingencies of amendments and moveable dates.

In conclusion, I must acknowledge the customary contribution made by my personal assistant, Mrs R. Paternoster, in the arduous task of collating the material. As always her attention to detail has been of invaluable assistance in reaching the publication deadline on time.

Whatever the shape and format of future editions, comments and suggestions will be no less welcome if forwarded in writing at the earliest opportunity.

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1981

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Readers who have used the annual Calendar of Religious Festivals over the years will be familiar with the purpose and format of the publication and how it has evolved during the last decade. Quite obviously the initial intention was to cater for the growing interest in the teaching of world religions as well as to familiarise teachers with the religious traditions and customs in an ever increasing multicultural society. The calendar has therefore served to complement R.E. syllabuses, the planning of assemblies in due season, and to indicate the pattern of major observances which might involve leave of absence from school or work as occasion demands.

The inclusion of Christian festivals has been slightly augmented in the recent past since it cannot be assumed that their significance would readily be recognised even among those who might loosely be called Christian. Additionally, it seems desirable that those who are less familiar with the host community's religious culture should avail of the opportunity to glean a little of the relevant background — however brief the description in this manual. A growing mutual appreciation may in turn lead to a consideration of the possible interconnection (whether on the basis of similarities or contrasts) between the various festivals. Such an approach may have a bearing on the framework of the seasons in nature, the human life cycle or the spectrum of major belief systems.

One of the most delicate, if not problematic, issues arising from religious celebrations stemming from a variety of traditions and cultures, is the question of being granted leave of absence from school or work. As far as Christianity is concerned, most of the important feast days coincide with public holidays — an indication of the way in which the salient religious culture has become an integral part of British society. Exceptions arise in the case of Roman Catholics who have additional (week) 'days of obligation', although most adherents in these instances attend worship before or after their normal daily commitments.

Adherents of non-Christian faiths need to work out an acceptable pattern of observance which usually involves a realistic and judicious arrangement with LEAs and other responsible Bodies. In some cases, minority religious communities i.e. Buddhists — defer the corporate celebration to the weekend closest to the actual festival date. In other traditions, observance of the precise date is 'de rigeur' and often involves services of worship throughout the entire day(s). An attempt has been made to indicate the festivals of major importance by the inclusion of \*\* when appropriate throughout the calendar. One only hopes that a fair and sympathetic solution can be worked out on this matter which has occasioned some recent contentious publicity in the press.



As ever the Editor would like to acknowledge the assistance afforded by a number of consultants who faithfully offer advice on moveable dates as they occur annually. In order to expedite the editorial process, a special meeting of local religious community representatives was held at the R.E. Centre on Tuesday, 19th May 1981, an innovation which it is hoped might become an annual event. Arising from our deliberations, several amendments and deletions have been made in the calendar, as will be evidenced in this edition. Additionally, note has been taken of a fair range of conscientious correspondence from several sources which has enabled us to make suitable adaptation to the text of the previous calendar. For instance, mention might be made of the fact that in the case of Muslim festivals, the dates given are only approximate since precise timing can only be determined within a few days of the actual event. Information on this point can be obtained from the Islamic Cultural Centre (London).

With the increasing pressure of personnel and finance in education, it may be necessary to make a radical decision to rationalise the production of this publication in the future. The solution may lie in the direction of furnishing an informative manual on festivals (already in hand) which would have perennial relevance, over a span of several years, while periodic supplements would cater for the annual contingencies of amendments and moveable dates. We may also be forced to revert to a format based on the January-December cycle in preference to the present pattern of the school year. In this way we are more likely to ascertain most, if not all, of the moveable feasts before we go to press.

In conclusion, I must acknowledge the customary contribution made by my personal assistant, Mrs R. Paternoster, in the arduous task of collating the material. As always her attention to detail has been of invaluable assistance in reaching the publication deadline on time.

Whatever the shape and format of future editions, comments and suggestions will be no less welcome if forwarded in writing at the earliest opportunity.

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May 1981



1982

## EDITOR'S NOTE

1. This Calendar, annually revised, has appeared for over a decade. Although primarily intended for teachers, it is no less applicable to people in industry, the caring ministries and the mass media.
2. Each inclusion, however brief, attempts to encapsulate the salient aspects of the relevant holy day.
3. Since the observance of certain festivals involves leave of absence from school or work (indicated by \*\* throughout) the following points may serve as a guideline:-
  - (a) In the Christian tradition most major festivals fall on a Sunday or public holiday and even in the case of Roman Catholic weekday feasts, public worship is usually observed before or after normal commitments.
  - (b) It should be clearly noted that all Jewish holy days commence at dusk on the evening before the dates given in this Calendar.
  - (c) Sikhs and Buddhists usually defer the celebration of significant feasts to the weekend closest to the actual event.
  - (d) In other traditions observance of the precise date(s) once known may be 'de rigueur' and often involves day-long attendance at the place of worship.
  - (e) In the case of Muslim holy days, the dates given are only approximate since the precise timing can only be calculated within a few days of the actual event.
  - (f) As regards some Asian festivals, a disparity — sometimes quite considerable — may occur in actual dates. This is occasioned by regional variation and local custom, and this is understandable when one considers, for example, the vastness of the Indian sub-continent.
  - (g) Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, especially with moveable and lunar feasts. In some instances information has not been available at the time of going to press.



4. The editor would like to record — as always — his appreciation to various contributors who have assisted with specialist advice. A special word of thanks must go to Mrs. R. Paternoster whose secretarial work in the compilation of the calendar has been invaluable.
  
5. Readers of this document are invited to suggest modifications or additions to the chronology and content of the many holy days featured throughout. Any such information should be forwarded to the Editor:-

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1983

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Due to the unfortunate recent illness of Desmond Brennan, I have been invited on a temporary basis to take over the editorship of this most valuable publication.

With a considerable feeling of humility in the face of the complexity of the task, I have tried to abide by the rule that the individual communities should define which festivals they consider to be important to themselves. Omissions and inclusions, however idiosyncratic they may appear, are by and large based on the values of the community concerned and the values revealed are in themselves an insight into the various different cultures and traditions reflected through these pages.

However, my still considerable ignorance of the subtleties of some of the traditions reflected here may well have led to errors, so that, while retaining the editorial right to maintain some form of balance and restrict the number of entries to ensure that the document is wieldy, adherents and experts alike are encouraged to contribute their comments. The text is never complete and newer religions vie with older ones for full recognition. Such matters are always open to further consideration.

The work done by Desmond Brennan has been invaluable and I repeat below some of the introductory notes that he published in the last edition.

“This calendar, annually revised, has appeared for over a decade, Although primarily intended for teachers, it is no less applicable to people in industry, the caring ministries and the mass media.

“Since the observance of certain festivals often involves leave of absence from school or work (the most important have been indicated by \* \* throughout) the following points may serve as guidelines:

- a) In the Christian tradition most major festivals fall on a Sunday or public holiday and even in the case of Roman Catholic weekday feasts, public worship is usually observed before or after normal commitments.
- b) It should be noted that all Jewish holy days commence at dusk on the evening before the dates given in this calendar.
- c) Sikhs and Buddhists usually defer the celebration of significant feasts to the weekend closest to the actual event.



- d) In other traditions observance of the precise date(s) once known may be “de rigueur” and may involve day-long attendance at the place of worship.
- e) In the case of Muslim holy days, the dates given are only approximate since the precise timing can only be calculated a few days before the actual event.
- f) As regards some Asian festivals, a disparity — sometimes quite considerable — may occur in actual dates. This is occasioned by regional variation and local custom, and this is understandable when one considers, for example, the vastness of the Indian sub-continent. This is particularly true of Buddhist festivals which often vary due to a variety of Buddhist traditions manifested in the different countries in which large Buddhist communities are to be found.
- g) Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, especially with moveable and lunar feasts. In some instances information has not been available at the time of going to press.”

For greater convenience, the scope of this text has been expanded to cover 18 months up to December 1984.

*Clyde A Lawton*  
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Board of Deputies of British Jews  
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1984

## EDITOR'S NOTE

With the forthcoming publication of Shap's major new book, 'Festivals in World Religions', the time has obviously come for a complete revision of this calendar which has been found so valuable in schools, industry and the social services over the last ten years or so.

As a result the text has been completely revised. The selection of festivals and comments about them is largely based on the much more comprehensive volume which will complement this calendar. In its reworked form, the words are all entirely mine.

However, the subtleties of some of the traditions reflected here may well have led to my making errors, so that, while retaining the editorial right to maintain some form of balance and restrict the number of entries to ensure that the document is wieldy, adherents and experts alike are encouraged to contribute their comments. This new text makes no claim to be complete and newer religions vie with older ones for full recognition. Such matters are always open to further consideration.

I have dispensed with the practice of attempting to differentiate between major and minor festivals. Invidious though this may be within a single tradition it becomes almost meaningless when one tradition is set against another. Reference ought to be made to Shap's 'Festivals in World Religions' (to be published in 1985) for a greater understanding of the relative importance within a given tradition of any single event.

A handful of points should be noted when using this calendar.

- a) The dates given for Muslim holy days are necessarily only approximate since the precise timing can only be fixed a few days before the actual event.
- b) All Jewish holy days commence at dusk on the evening before the dates given here.
- c) Some traditions contain such observances and restrictions on their holy days that children and adults may be unable to attend school or work if they wish to observe their religious traditions correctly.



- d) Sikhs and Buddhists are sometimes prepared to defer the celebration of significant feasts to the weekend closest to the actual event.
- e) Asian festivals are subject to considerable variation in both date and custom, and this is understandable when one considers, for example, the vastness of the Indian sub-continent. Buddhist festivals in particular are difficult to generalise about since in different countries in which large Buddhist communities are to be found different traditions and festivals are observed or the same festival is observed on different dates.

Where it has been impossible to establish dates, particularly in those traditions where the dates are not fixed until lunar motions have been observed, the festival has been entered at the end of the month in which it is most likely to occur.

I would be very happy to receive advice and comments on the entries and omissions to be found in this text.

*Clive A. Lawton*  
Headmaster  
King David High School  
Childwall Road  
Liverpool 15.

**For the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education.**



1985

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Last year, this calendar which has been found so valuable in schools, industry and the social services over the last ten years or so was completely revised in preparation for Shap's major new book 'Festivals in World Religions' due to be published by Longman in Autumn 1985. The selection of festivals and comments about them is largely based on this much more comprehensive volume which will complement this booklet. This text is unable to include folk and secular festivals and I have accepted the view of many Christians that, despite the name, Hallowe'en falls into one of these categories.

However, the subtleties of some of the traditions reflected here may well have led to my making errors, so that, while retaining the editorial right to maintain some form of balance and restrict the number of entries to ensure that the document is wieldy, adherents and experts alike are encouraged to contribute their comments. This new text makes no claim to be complete and newer religions vie with older ones for full recognition. I am conscious, for example, that the Rastafarian community is as yet unrepresented in these pages.

I have dispensed with the practice of attempting to differentiate between major and minor festivals. Invidious though this may be within a single tradition it becomes almost meaningless when one tradition is set against another. Reference ought to be made to 'Festivals in World Religions' for a greater understanding of the relative importance within a given tradition of any single event.

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- e) Asian festivals are subject to considerable variation in both date and custom, and this is understandable when one considers, for example, the vastness of the Indian sub-continent. Buddhist festivals in particular are difficult to generalise about since in different countries in which large Buddhist communities are to be found different traditions and festivals are observed or the same festival is observed on different dates.

Where it has been impossible to establish dates, particularly in those traditions where the dates are not fixed until lunar motions have been observed, the festival has been entered at the end of the month in which it is most likely to occur. The asterisks indicate that the date is not known, not that the festival in question falls at the end of the month.

I would be very happy to receive advice and comments on the entries and omissions to be found in this text.

*Clive A. Lawton*  
Headmaster  
King David High School  
Childwall Road  
Liverpool 15

**For the Shap Working Party on World Religions, in Education**



1986

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Two years ago, this calendar which has been found so valuable in schools, industry and the social services over the last ten years or so was completely revised in preparation for Shap's major new book 'Festivals in World Religions'. I am pleased that the book is now available, published by Longman, and I record my debt to it in preparing the text for this calendar. The selection of festivals and comments about them is largely based on this much more comprehensive volume which complements this booklet. The calendar says little or nothing, for example, about folk or secular festivals.

However, the subtleties of some of the traditions reflected here may well have led to my making errors, so that, while retaining the editorial right to maintain some form of balance and restrict the number of entries to ensure that the document is wieldy, adherents and experts alike are encouraged to contribute their comments. This new text makes no claim to be complete and newer religions vie with older ones for full recognition. I am conscious, for example, that the Rastafarian community is as yet unrepresented in these pages.

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Where it has been impossible to establish exact dates, particularly in those traditions where the dates are not fixed until lunar motions have been observed, estimated dates have been given, In particular, dates for festivals of Eastern traditions after April 1987 are necessarily approximate.

I trust that the addition of the summary page at the back is found useful.

I would be very happy to receive advice and comments on the entries and omissions to be found in this text.

*Clive A. Lawton*  
Headmaster  
King David High School  
Childwall Road  
Liverpool 15

**For the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education**



1987

## EDITORS NOTE

Three years ago, this calendar, which has been found so valuable in schools, industry and the social services over the last ten years or so, was completely revised in preparation for Shap's major new book 'Festivals in World Religions'. I am pleased that the book is now available, published by Longman, and I record my debt to it in preparing the text for this calendar. The selection of festivals and comments about them is largely based on this much more comprehensive volume which complements this booklet. The calendar says little or nothing, for example, about folk or secular festivals.

However, the subtleties of some of the traditions reflected here may well have led to my making errors, so that while retaining the editorial right to maintain some form of balance and restrict the number of entries to ensure that the document is wieldy, adherents and experts alike are encouraged to contribute their comments. This new text makes no claim to be complete and newer religions vie with older ones for full recognition. The Rastafarian community is now represented in these pages, but that still does not by any means make it complete or totally comprehensive.

I have dispensed with the practice of attempting to differentiate between major and minor festivals. Invidious though this may be within a single tradition it becomes almost meaningless when one tradition is set against another. Reference ought to be made to 'Festivals in World Religions' for a greater understanding of the relative importance within a given tradition of any single event.

A handful of points should be noted when using this calendar.

- a) The dates given for Muslim holy days are necessarily only approximate since the precise timing can only be fixed a few days before the actual event.
- b) All Jewish holy days commence at dusk on the evening before the dates given here.
- c) Some traditions contain such observances and restrictions on their holy days that children and adults may be unable to attend school or work if they wish to observe their religious traditions correctly.
- d) Sikhs and Buddhists are sometimes prepared to defer the celebration of significant feasts to the weekend closest to the actual event.
- e) Asian festivals are subject to considerable variation in both date and custom, and this is understandable when one considers, for example, the vastness of the Indian sub-continent. Buddhist festivals in particular are difficult to generalise about since in different countries in which large Buddhist



communities are to be found, different traditions and festivals are observed or the same festival is observed on different dates.

Where it has been impossible to establish exact dates, particularly in those traditions where the dates are not fixed until lunar motions have been observed, estimated dates have been given. In particular, dates for festivals of Eastern traditions after April 1988 are necessarily approximate.

I trust that the addition of the summary page at the back is found useful.

I would be very happy to receive advice and comments on the entries and omissions to be found in this text, and am particularly grateful for all the comments I have received this year from Christian Orthodox readers.

*Clive A. Lawton*  
Headmaster,  
King David High School  
Childwall Road  
Liverpool 15

**For the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education**



1988

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1989

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To adopt a truly multicultural perspective it is important to note that none of the festivals in this publication 'move about'. It is merely that the calendars in which they are fixed are not calculated in line with the Gregorian one. A community's calendar often enshrines some of its most important perceptions and its rhythms and preoccupations are only strange or inconvenient if one puts the secular year at the centre of one's life. If we wish to be properly aware of the outlook of others it is important to recognise that a month can last nineteen days, that there is nothing natural about a seven day week, that there is nothing obvious about starting a day at midnight, and that we are not only in the twentieth century, but also in the fifteenth century, the second century, the twenty sixth and the fifty-eighth.

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Once again, I conclude by inviting comments and advice, thanking all those who have offered me advice this year, and by sending my particular good wishes to Abdul Matin at the Commission for Racial Equality who, after many years of guiding this publication through the process of printing and production, is now taking retirement. Another special date for another calendar!

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**For the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education**



**1990**

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Once again, I conclude by inviting comments and advice and thanking all those who have offered me advice this year. I am particularly challenged by the thought of various tribal and local religions which are now developing communities in Britain. The calendar is not ever-expandable, but it ought to be representative.



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Acknowledgements: My thanks to Professor M Boyce; Dr W Owen Cole; Mr R El Droubie; Professor R Gombrich; Mr P Hainsworth; Mr R Jackson; Mr D Jones; Mr V P Kanitkar; Professor M Pye and Reverend T Shannon, for their advice on the festivals and help in obtaining dates.

**For the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education.**



1991

## FOREWORD

Compiling this calendar has never been easy. To call it a calendar is, of course, a considerable over-simplification since it contains several calendars rolled into one.

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14 Sir Thomas Street  
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**For the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education.**



1992

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Initiatives like Local Management of Schools (LMS) are obviously making it harder to propagate centralised perspectives on the philosophy any given institution should hold. We in Shap recognise that each individual school, hospital, workplace or whatever needs to accept the importance of the kinds of sensitivities that this calendar represents. Relying on central authorities to purchase and distribute the calendar on behalf of the institutions under their care is no substitute for the separate institutions wanting it themselves. In the end, I suppose, it is only another dimension of the pluralism we aspire to - genuine diversity maintaining a deep interest in the specific identity of others.

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1994

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We in Shap recognise that each individual school, hospital, workplace or whatever needs to accept the importance of the kinds of sensitivities that this calendar represents. Recent government circulars which attempt to expand the law's demands by making school assemblies, for example, more narrow than they need to be, makes it all the more necessary that those who value the kinds of outlook and opportunities to be truly aware of the diversity of our population that the calendar contains do not just take it for granted that it is obvious.

What is more, the fragmentation of LEAs and Health Authorities means that we can no longer rely on central authorities to purchase and distribute the calendar on behalf of the institutions under their care. In view, though, of the philosophical implications of purchasing this calendar and using it, we recognise source that central distribution is no substitute for the separate institutions wanting it themselves. In the end, I suppose, it is only another dimension of the pluralism we aspire to - genuine diversity maintaining a deep interest in the specific identity of others.

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Diary publishers, teacher unions and even religious communities themselves gather their information on festivals from this calendar. More and more individual organisations and groups are attempting, here and abroad, to produce their own summary of the information contained herein. They often try to get the information from us before we publish ours and are frustrated by our reluctance and, in some cases inability, to produce information before we can. We do not publish so late in the year just to inconvenience people. It is all to do with securing reliable dates at the earliest possible opportunity.

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**For the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education**



1995

## EDITOR'S NOTE

We in Shap recognise that each individual school, hospital, workplace or whatever needs to accept the importance of the kinds of sensitivities that this calendar represents. Recent government circulars which attempt to expand the laws demands by making school assemblies, for example, more narrow than they need to be, make it all the more necessary that those who value the kinds of outlook and opportunities to be truly aware of the diversity of our population that the calendar contains do not just take it for granted that it is obvious.

What is more, the fragmentation of LEAs and Health Authorities means that we can no longer rely on central authorities to purchase and distribute the calendar on behalf of the institutions under their care. In view, though, of the philosophical implications of purchasing this calendar and using it, we recognise that central distribution is no substitute for the separate institutions wanting it themselves. In the end, I suppose, it is only another dimension of the pluralism we aspire to - genuine diversity maintaining a deep interest in the specific identity of others.

I hope that the calendar together with the wall chart will make the information thoroughly accessible, but the wall chart does not substitute for the fuller information within the calendar itself and *Festivals in World Religions* edited by Alan Brown.

Diary publishers, teacher unions and even religious communities themselves gather their information on festivals from this calendar. More and more individual organisations and groups are attempting, here and abroad, to produce their own summary of the information contained herein. They often try to get the information from us before we publish ours and are frustrated by our reluctance and, in some cases inability, to produce information before it is possible. We do not publish so late in the year just to inconvenience people. It is all to do with securing reliable dates at the earliest possible opportunity.

(There is only slight satisfaction in the pirated, lifted and plagiarised versions that are appearing even abroad without permission or proper credit to the Shap Working Party - which puts in all the work into gathering this information into what is probably a unique document.) The Gregorian calendar which most of us use in our secular dealings is only used by a small proportion of the world's religions - and even those who do use it (for example, Christianity) do not necessarily rely on it entirely.

To adopt a truly multicultural perspective, it is important to note that none of the festivals in this publication 'move about'. It is merely that the calendars in which they are fixed are not calculated in line with the Gregorian one. A community's calendar



often enshrines some of its most important perceptions and its rhythms and preoccupations are only strange or inconvenient if one puts the secular year at the centre of one's life.

If we wish to be properly aware of the outlook of others it is important to recognise, that a month can last nineteen days, that there is nothing natural about a seven day week, that there is nothing obvious about starting a day at midnight and that we are not only in the twentieth century but at one and the same time also in the fifteenth century, the second century, the twenty sixth and the fifty-eighth.

The need to be sympathetic to the special events in someone else's life has led to the tremendous popularity of this publication. It has now been running for about twenty five years and has been taken up increasingly by industry, educational institutions and the social services so they can work more effectively and efficiently. There is, for example, nothing more stupid than arranging an event on a day on which you should have known none of your clients would think of turning up!

From time to time I receive requests for information and criticisms of content. I try to respond helpfully to the first and humbly to the second. The need for several of these communications might be obviated if the following points are borne in mind:

- a) Information about the relative importance of festivals within a tradition (or fuller information on the festivals in this publication) is best obtained from the Shap book 'Festivals in World Religions' published by Longman.
- b) Permission to reproduce the information herein may be obtained by application to the distribution address given on the front page. Copyright rests with the Shap Working Party and a charge may be made.
- c) Because several eastern traditions do not fix their calendar until the spring of the year in question, many such dates after March in this document are estimates (based on the best calculations available at the time of going to press) and should be treated as such.
- d) As in c) above, Muslim holy days can also only be firmly fixed a few days before the actual event. In all such cases it is as well to check with a local community if possible nearer the time.
- e) All Jewish holy days and some festivals of other religions commence at dusk on the evening before the dates given here.



- f) Sikhs and Buddhists are sometimes prepared to defer the celebration of significant feasts to the weekend closest to the actual event.
- g) Asian festivals are subject to considerable variation in date and custom. Buddhist festivals in particular vary according to nationality so that in different countries different traditions and festivals are observed or the same festival is observed on different dates.

I have described festivals and their principle observances from the point of view of a respectful outsider. I have avoided statements like 'Hindus believe that...' and have simply stated the belief. At the same time though I have not referred to Krishna as the Lord Krishna or to the Bible as the Holy Bible. I trust that my middle line treads the correct path.

For all the difficulties of producing this calendar, I do believe that it adds to the understanding in the world, and I therefore submit it not least as a labour of love.

Once again, I conclude by inviting comments and advice and thanking all those who have offered me advice this year. The calendar is not ever expandable, but it ought to be representative.

Clive A Lawton  
Chief Executive, Jewish Continuity, 201 Haverstock Hill, London NW3 4QG

**For the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education**



1996

## EDITORS' NOTES

The Shap Calendar is a *mélange* of Peter Pan, who never grew up, and the Phoenix, the mystic bird that rises again from the ashes of its funeral pyre.

The former is necessarily true since the Calendar is an ongoing, developing institution that has emerged from the childhood of its primary use in the school situation to its current adolescence where hospital service and prison, commerce and industry, leisure services and youth organisations are also making use of its facilities; but the prime of its life is still to come and its full impact in a pluralistic situation lies ahead, when it may well help further to erect the edifice of a genuinely tolerant, multi-cultural society as the natural pattern of life in this country.

The Phoenix image is appropriate in that this edition of the Calendar booklet contains a revised and enlarged text and a number of other changes that we hope will enhance its value to its varied and growing readership. Its past is by no means discarded, but will provide the basis on which we seek to build bigger and better.

In revising the text of the Calendar we have taken careful note of the replies to last year's Calendar Questionnaire and of the responses contributed by a number of colleagues committed to or with expertise in the major religious traditions. Our grateful thanks are extended in this connection to those listed below.

They were asked for comment on the greetings used at festival times, the distinctions between major and minor festivals, some indication of festival customs and rituals and of National and Harvest festivals and celebrations, related scriptural quotations and references, an indication of how festivals are observed in Britain, and the colours, clothes and foods linked to specific festivals. Evidence of their responses will be seen in the modifications to the text of this booklet that follow. This is, however, an ongoing process, and comments from readers with a view to further improvements in future years will always be welcome.

The replies to the questionnaire indicated a welcome for more detail in the text and for cross referencing the Calendar with the Shap book, *Festivals in World Religions*. Our greatest surprise was that only a third of respondents had heard of the book. Edited by Alan Brown and published by Longman in 1986 and 1992, ISBN 0-582-36196-6, it is available in Softback while stocks last at £10.50 plus £1.50 P&P from the Shap Working Party, located at the National Society's RE Centre. If demand exceeds supply, a further soft back edition will be considered.



Of those replying to the questionnaire 64% indicated they would also welcome an enlarged package of materials, either containing additional visual materials or other festival aids. There was very limited support for producing a commercial glossy Calendar with photographs. Working Party members have been active accordingly in developing a set of A3 photographs with teaching notes, a set of festival celebration/good wishes cards, and a set of symbols for the major world faiths on a floppy disk. Details will be circulated when available.

The other major change to the Calendar booklet consists of the elimination of the text for the months of August to December when the dates are shown for the second time in our seventeen month long booklet. The dates are still there, but in an attempt to make space for the fuller text and to limit price increases, the duplication of textual material has been eliminated. We hope this will not prove a serious problem for users.

The Festivals chart has also been modified in a number of minor respects, partly to achieve greater clarity and partly in deference to a number of important requests from within religious traditions. These affect the symbols used in the Baha'i, Jain, Jewish and Rastafarian faiths, and the colouring and layout of the rows and columns. Other requests have affected slightly the wording of some of the booklet's text for certain Sikh and Orthodox Christian festivals; and after some discussion of whether mention of the Prophet Muhammad should be followed with the blessing 'Peace be upon him' or some other appropriate symbol, it was felt best not to set such a precedent and to avoid wherever possible terms like 'Lord' that in Christian or Hindu contexts might equally imply a devotional or committed approach.

A fresh addition to the Calendar is the Women's World Day of Prayer, and the relocation of National Saints' Days to the line of Christian festivals, where they are judged to be more appropriate.

For further detail of important issues in the use of the Calendar, please look back to the introduction to previous editions, where the Editor's Note has highlighted many issues of such importance that we will need to return to these in future years.

Finally, we extend a word of warm thanks to Clive Lawton, Chief Executive of Jewish Continuity, who has edited the Calendar for many years. His influence will still be felt by the Shap members who have undertaken the revision of the text and various other editorial and associated duties and will see the Calendar through the press.

Also, a word of thanks to all who have supplied dates for the coming year, to those who have responded to requests for suggestions, and to our loyal readership. We hope in a future edition to provide details of people committed to or with expertise in specific



traditions who may be willing to answer detailed queries from readers seeking further information about festivals, but in the meantime we would ask you to consult the Festivals book before asking for information which may already be given there. 'It's a good read'!

Riadh El-Droubie  
Cherry Gould  
Peter Woodward



1997

## EDITORS' NOTES

We wish at the outset to thank all those contributors who have supplied dates for the coming year. Their help is not only much appreciated. It is also essential if we are to achieve accuracy in the material we present and, at the same time, remain faithful to the ethos of the different faith communities whose festivals we seek to describe.

In our attempts to achieve the latter, we have, in several cases, again enlarged or modified the descriptive entries in the Calendar to make them more 'user friendly', incorporating the type of detail that we hope will help teachers and others relate the information to their customers' needs.

We welcome further comment from our readership to extend the process still further.

Regular readers will see that we have reverted to the inclusion of text for the full 18 months of the Calendar's coverage. This involves a slight increase in the number of pages, but we believe it will make for easier use over the full period it covers.

We continue the practice we introduced last year of giving page numbers that relate to the Shap book 'Festivals in World Religions', edited by Alan Brown and published in 1986 by Longmans. This is now out of print, but a new edition is in preparation with RMEP (Religious and Moral Education Press - a subsidiary of Chansitor Publications Ltd). We expect this will be published in April, 1998 at a price of £19.95. We hope that next year's Calendar can be cross-referenced to both editions. Copies will be available from the Shap Working Party at the National Society's RE Centre. See next page for fuller detail.

The task of obtaining festival dates is not a straightforward one and it is the complexity of this process which prevents earlier publication of the Calendar each year. Many dates are constant fixtures and remain the same year after year (eg Christian saints' days and many Japanese festivals), and certain others can be forecast for several years ahead with a reasonable degree of accuracy (Jewish, Muslim, Christian, for the most part). There are those, however, mostly in the Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Parsi, and Sikh traditions, which are not determined, in many cases, until late spring of the previous year, and obtaining these dates from our various sources, checking on their accuracy as far as we can, and then inserting them into the updated Calendar makes earlier publication extremely difficult.

We are currently working at this aspect, and hope next year to be able to forecast for two or three years ahead the likely occurrence of a few of the key dates (eg Pesach, Eid-



ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha) that users often request to help them when making arrangements (eg for factory, office or school closures) that will relate to local community needs. In particular requests have been received for the year 2,000, whose events are being planned further in advance than usual. Such forecasts on our part must inevitably be provisional in many cases, and some will merely point to the week or even the month when the festival is likely to be celebrated. We hope to offer some guidance, however, that may be of help to our customers. Watch this space next year for further information.

Riadh El-Droubie  
Cherry Gould  
Peter Woodward



1998

## EDITORS' NOTES

We thank again all those contributors who have helped us with dates for the festivals that take place in the coming year. We make contact with them each year at this time to ensure that the latest information that is available is included in the Calendar. In one instance in particular there is news of important changes that will affect future dates, as is indicated below.

First, however, the major news of the year. The Shap book 'Festivals in World Religions' will have been published by the time this edition of the Calendar is printed. An advertisement and order form appears elsewhere in the Calendar. Its publication is, however, too late for us to include cross-referencing to the pages of the new edition, as we have done with the earlier one. This will have to wait for next year's Calendar, when we will probably include reference to appropriate page numbers for both editions. Our thanks are extended to all the contributors of chapters to the new edition, many of whom also act as sources for relevant festival dates.

The inclusion of text for the full 18 months of the Calendar's coverage has been well received, and we are continuing that practice for the time being.

After much deliberation the Sikh community worldwide has decided to fix most of the dates that Sikhs observe on a permanent basis, and the dates for all but one of the Sikh festivals shown here have been determined in Amritsar and are likely to remain the same from year to year. The exception is the Birthday of Guru Nanak, which is still undecided, but is likely to be known by the time of next year's Calendar.

In similar vein there are changes afoot in connection with the relation of Orthodox Easter to Western celebrations of the festival, and it is likely that the two will be celebrated on the same date in future years.

Our attempts to ascertain dates in advance for important festivals are, as ever, fraught with difficulty, especially in Indian traditions, and the following tentative guidelines for the year 2000 are inevitably subject to confirmation. It seems likely, however, that Rosh Hashana (the Jewish New Year - 5761) will commence on the evening of Friday, 29 September, 2000, with Pesah being celebrated on ?? April; that Eid ul Fitr will be celebrated twice – on 7 January and again on 27 December (with Ramadan commencing on 27 November 2000) and Eid ul Adha on 15 March (subject to the sighting of the new moon), while the Muslim New Year (Al Hijra) 1421 is likely to commence on 5 April.



Other New Years that fall between January and December 2000 include the Bahai' era where the year 157 begins on 21 March (Naw-Ruz), the Buddhist New Year 2544, which commences on various dates in different countries (eg April in Burma, Sri Lanka and Thailand, and February in Tibet), the Ethiopian New Year celebrated by Rastafarians on 11 September, and the Zoroastrian New Year 1379 (Jamshedi Noruz - March 21, according to the Fasli Calendar) . It must be stressed that New Year takes different forms and is perceived in differing ways in the various traditions, and that the Western concept of linear time and the teleological associations it carries in its train should not be seen as universal. It would be inappropriate to generalise about the nature of the year and its beginnings when lunar and cyclic traditions are often accompanied by alternative associations and traditions.

Riadh El-Droubie  
Cherry Gould  
David Rose  
Peter Woodward



**1999**

## **EDITORS' NOTES**

We record with sadness the death of our colleague, Riadh El-Droubie, who contributed so much to the content and accuracy of our Shap Calendar and Journal, whilst also taking responsibility for their annual printing for so many years. We miss him greatly and extend our good wishes to his wife and family. Riadh was a member of the Shap Working Party from its early days and already we miss his humour, patience and ingenuity in our deliberations.

One of Riadh's last tasks was to revise his chapter on 'Muslim Festivals' for the new edition of the Shap book, *Festivals in World Religions*, published in the summer of 1998. He took great care over this revision and the list of festival dates on page 120 (with its careful disclaimer of the possibility of achieving total accuracy on account of the lunar calendar) will serve as a fitting memorial to his work that will carry us through with some confidence to the year 2005 (1425 AH). The four photographs he provided for his chapter also draw attention to the variety and spirituality of his vision of the role of Islam in the educational world of today. He would be delighted to know how essential a tool it has become for teachers. A separate order form for the book is enclosed to help those who have not yet discovered the support it gives to users of this Calendar.

One of the key innovations Riadh welcomed and helped to implement was the introduction of cross referencing of pages between the first edition of *Festivals in World Religions* and the annual Shap Calendar. With the publication of the 1998 edition of the book we have introduced in the Calendar wherever appropriate page references for a) the original and b) the new editions of the book, in that order. For instance, the Calendar entry for EID-UL-FITR now concludes: a) pp 220-223; b) pp 110, 112, 114-116, 120, 140, vii; (the vii relating to the colour photograph section in the centre of the book).

Other important changes in the celebration of festivals introduced recently include attempts (so far incomplete) to arrange a date for Easter so that Orthodox and Western celebrations coincide (April 30th, 2000 and April 23rd, 2000 respectively at present); and the Sikh communities' attempts to standardise dates for their major festivals so that, according to the Western calendar, they fall on the same date regularly each year. Teachers in particular may find it useful to have the full list of these proposals set out together below as a corrective to earlier literature, but readers should note that these are at present tentative proposals that have not yet received full agreement within the Sikh community. The list on page 126 of the Shap Festivals book will be substantially accurate and helpful if the proposals are confirmed, but needs the addition of the recently suggested date for Guru Nanak's Birthday (April 14th), In particular Vaisakhi



(Baisakhi) is now set for April 14th as well, and not April 13th as previously (although celebrations often occur on the nearest Sunday, both in this country and in India).

- January 5th Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh, the ninth Sikh Guru
- March 14th Hola Mohalla Mela
- April 14th Vaisakhi (Baisakhi)
- April 14th Birthday of Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru
- June 16th Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Sikh Guru
- September 1st Installation of the Guru Granth Sahib in the Golden Temple at Amritsar
- October 20th Guruship bestowed on the Guru Granth Sahib by Guru Gobind Singh
- October/November Diwali (this date is at present unfixed as it relates to Hindu celebrations as well)
- November 24th Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru

While some are seeking simplification, others are living with complexity. The observance of Zoroastrian dates is particularly complex since there are three Parsi Calendars in use (Shenshai, Qadimi and Fasli), one of which is fixed and two where the year recedes by one day each four years by contrast to the Gregorian Calendar (see Pp 131-132 of the new edition of the Shap book Festivals in World Religions for detail). For the time being, our custom of including in the Shap Calendar five Zoroastrian festivals (Jamshedi Noruz, Zartusht-No-Diso, Farvardigan, No Ruz and Khordad Sal) will continue.

At the same time our attention has been drawn by the Zoroastrian community in London to the fact that there are other significant festivals which include Jashan-E Sadeh, a Fasli festival to celebrate the discovery of Fire (January 30th, 2000), Jashan-E-Tiragan/ Maidyoishema Ghambar, a Fasli mid-summer festival (solstice) linked to the creation of Water (August 22nd 1999, August 21st 2000), and Jashan-E-Mehergan, a Fasli festival to celebrate the autumn equinox, which is dedicated to the 'Guardian Protector' Divinity (Mithra), protector of the Sun, and ensures Justice (October 2nd, 1999 and 2000). In each of these cases Mr. M. Deboo of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe invites guests from other faiths to visit Zoroastrian House, 88 Compayne Gardens, London NW6 3RU by prior arrangement to witness a Zarathustrian religious ceremony. He may be contacted to arrange an invitation on 0171 328 6018 or by Fax to 0171 625 1685. Mr Deboo can also provide a still more complete list of Zoroastrian festivals on request.

A further area where a different order of complexity prevails lies in the recording of Chinese and Japanese festivals, where both the Calendar and the Shap Festivals book focus on national and cultural aspects as much as on religious issues. While it might



seem more appropriate at one level and consistent with our treatment of other traditions to home in on Confucian, Taoist, Shinto and Buddhist faiths and New Religious Movements, the issue is by no means as simple as that, and it seems best to harmonise under the broader cultural headings for the time being. For fuller discussion of these issues the introductory section to the three chapters on Buddhist, Chinese and Japanese Festivals in the Festivals book will reward close attention.

Finally a word about millennial issues. In last year's editorial we stressed that 'New Year takes different forms and is perceived in differing ways in the various traditions. The Western concept of linear time and the teleological associations it carries in its train should not be seen as universal. It would be inappropriate to generalise about the nature of the year and its beginnings when lunar and cyclic traditions are often accompanied by alternative associations and customs.'

This is still more true of the millennium, and it is appropriate to draw attention again to the dangers of viewing time through Western eyes alone.

At the same time the year 2000 presupposes dating from a Christian event, no matter how uncertain and suspect the exact timing may be. This point is dealt with in some detail in the current edition of the Shap Journal where a further article on Millennial issues and the Calendar may be found. An excellent leaflet, MARKING THE MILLENNIUM IN A MULTI-FAITH CONTEXT - Guidelines for Events Organisers has been produced by the Lambeth Consultation Group on the Millennium in association with the Inter Faith Network for the UK and may be obtained together with A Millennium Guide (a stamped self-addressed A4 envelope needed please) from the CTE Millennium Officer, Board of Mission, Church House, London SW1P 3NZ (Tel: 0171 340 0250). The Inter Faith Network (5\_7 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SN; Tel: 0171 388 0008) can also respond to questions about inter faith issues and provide contacts with different faith communities, effectively complementing the Shap Working Party's interest in educational affairs.

In his introduction to the chapter on Japanese Festivals in the Shap Festivals book Professor Michael Pye writes that 'The common word for 'festival' in Japan is matsuri, which implies a combination of ritual celebration and public good cheer.' That perhaps is the ideal mixture that will allow people of many differing traditions to share in the excitement of an event that will not recur for another thousand years - or so. So let's celebrate !

Cherry Gould  
David Rose  
Peter Woodward



2000

## EDITORS' NOTES

The millennium is safely over – or at least it is over for those who celebrated it on 1/1/2000 or earlier. Those who take seriously the issue that there was no year nought in Roman counting (see last year's Shap Journal) will logically celebrate on 1/1/2001. No doubt this issue will recur in a hundred years time or thereabouts. Perhaps there will be further articles in the Shap Journal and mention in the Shap Calendar then – who knows? At least it is appropriate that the current Shap Journal, published along with this edition of the Calendar, is focusing on 'Time'.

**Issues relating to 'Time' are naturally not quick to resolve, and the dilemma faced by the Sikh community, to which we made reference last year, is still running. Part of the community prefers to follow the traditional custom of varying dates annually according to a lunar calendar, as is used in determining Hindu dates in India. Other Sikhs would like to standardise dates on a Western style approach, thus ensuring that they fall on the same date each year. No doubt this will be resolved in due course.**

**As a result of these discussions the Sikh lunar dates for 2001 are not available at the time of going to press, and the dates given in the text relate to the proposed new solar calendar. It may be helpful to note however that lunar dated celebrations of Guru Nanak's birthday have normally fallen in November, as has the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, while the birthday of Guru Gobind Singh has fallen in January and the martyrdom of Guru Arjan in June. It is possible that many gurdwaras will still commemorate these events on the lunar rather than the solar dates.**

It is always helpful when issues are raised by our readers, and two questions requiring careful thought have emerged this year. The Jewish Chronicle has queried the exclusion of Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israeli Independence Day, from our pages, whereas it was included until the last few years. And the Birmingham Branch of the National Union of Teachers has asked the Working Party to clarify which festivals are 'essential' for observance by adherents and so will qualify for time off from school for pupils and teachers – and possibly with pay in the latter case.

The issue in the first case revolves around the nature of the Calendar, where the focus is principally upon religious festivals. Can an Independence Day celebration be seen as religious, or does the inclusion of Yom Ha'atzmaut open the doors to a range of secular celebrations or nationalist observances which lie beyond our brief? The description in the Shap book *Festivals in World Religions* clearly includes a number of religious rituals and observances. Could this be seen as an especially relevant case, or is the issue of Israeli independence too political a subject for inclusion here? The question will be



debated at the full meeting of the Working Party in July and a decision will be recorded here for the following year.

The issue raised by the NUT involves further issues. Does a Working Party like Shap have the right to determine which festivals are 'essential' or should that decision be made by the faiths themselves, and if so by which bodies? Should there be a standard number in each faith or should the concerns of the Seventh Day Adventists or of Orthodox Jews for a wider number than others seem likely to request be given favourable consideration? The Shap Calendar is already regarded as 'gospel' by one Local Authority which only saw its way to give a teacher the day 'off' for Orthodox Easter if the festival was referred to in the Shap Calendar. Is an extension of this desirable or even possible, and could/should it also be further extended to clarify which pilgrimages are of an 'essential or obligatory nature'? This too will be discussed by the Working Party in July. Watch this space . . .

Comments or questions from our readers/users are clearly helpful and further response or views on these or other relevant issues is invited.

Whatever the outcomes, keep celebrating.

Cherry Gould  
David Rose  
Peter Woodward



**2001**

## **EDITORS' NOTES**

Many aspects of producing a document as complex as the *Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals* are simply repetitive: the same festivals are included year after year; letters are written to the same individuals and organisations each January; the descriptive material is polished or updated occasionally, but by and large it then continues in what becomes a standard format; the dates and so the positions they take in relation to each other vary since many traditions use a lunar base for their celebrations, and so a major cut and paste operation is called for on the word processor, but the process is basically repeated as in previous years; copy is sent to the printer and proofs are checked for both Calendar and wall chart; complimentary copies are sent to the same people and organisations year by year; much is the same every time.

It is refreshing to note, however, how much variety appears each year, since religions have a habit of evoking the unexpected, and festivals are notable for their spontaneity as well as for their adherence to tradition. A number of minor changes need to be updated each time the Calendar appears, such as the numbering of the Jewish and Muslim New Years (5762 AC and 1421 AH respectively in 2002) and the gospel for the Ethiopian year in the Rastafarian four year cycle (Matthew in 2002). But there are also more significant issues, some of which featured in last year's editorial, that raise important concerns and are clearly of importance to many of our readers. Four current topics are the suggested changes to Sikh dates, the inclusion or exclusion of National Holocaust Day, continuing concern over Yom Ha'atzmaut, and requests from a number of bodies for Shap to identify major festivals in the different religious traditions on which absence from school or work may be legitimately anticipated.

At present the saga of the debate within Sikh communities still appears to be unresolved, and the dilemma faced by the Sikh community, to which we made reference last year, is still running. Part of the community still prefers to follow the traditional custom of varying dates annually according to a lunar calendar, as is used in determining Hindu dates in India. Other Sikhs would like to standardise dates on a Western style approach, thus ensuring that they fall on the same date each year. As a result of these discussions the Sikh lunar dates for 2001 are not clear at the time of going to press and the months where these fall are shown with asterisks to denote this uncertainty.

Then there is the introduction in January 2000 of what has become known as **National Holocaust Day**. This is totally separate and different from Yom Hashoah, the Jewish celebration that is an annual reminder of Jewish (and other) sufferings in the second world war. Its basis is more political than religious, and its intention is to embrace all aspects of British community life in its opposition to racism and fascism, and to focus on



other examples of recent persecution as well as on that carried out by the Nazis in the 1930s and 1940s. It is in fact closely comparable to similar happenings in a number of other countries and might perhaps be better designated as International Holocaust Day. Our Working Party debated at its meeting in December 2000 the issue of whether we should include the Day in our Calendar in the light of its importance to schools and colleges. This raised the wider issue of whether we should have a section in our wall chart for National events. At the moment our decision is that it would be inappropriate to include a political celebration in a Calendar of religious festivals, but comment and contribution is invited, especially as a further innovation this year is to include the Calendar Editorial in the annual Shap Journal, where it may well evoke further correspondence.

A third issue which has been raised by our readers is that of Yom Ha'atzma'ut, a celebration held by many Jews to mark the anniversary of the creation of the modern state of Israel in 1948. The Working Party has twice debated the question of whether this should be reinstated in the Calendar – it was included for many years but was omitted some three or four years ago when the task of compiling the Calendar was handed over to a team rather than, as previously, a single individual. The issue is particularly relevant at present since a number of Arab communities in Israel, Christian as well as Muslim, have objected strongly to various aspects of the celebration and have staged a series of protests and riots against its celebration there. It is, however, a celebration of some religious significance in addition to its political importance, and a liturgy of prayers and cultural rituals has evolved that emphasise the religious aspect of its nature. It is the development of this liturgical aspect that principally led the Working Party to agree to renew its inclusion in the Calendar, and readers may well be interested to read the relevant paragraphs on page 107 of the current edition of the Shap book *Festivals in World Religions* (pages 206-207 in the first edition).

A second factor that influenced our thinking in this direction was the right of religious traditions rather than an external body such as Shap to determine the relevance of their own celebrations, though there is obviously a limit in terms of space and comparability as to how far this argument can be followed. Recent requests to include reference to the Rastafarian celebration of Christmas have received a positive response, whereas a suggestion from the Zoroastrian community in London that we might broaden our coverage and virtually double the number of their celebrations currently included was less successful, since their inclusion would produce an imbalance with the number of minor festivals included in other traditions.

On similar lines there has been renewed interest in pressurising the Working Party to 'short list' a number of major festivals in each religious tradition that would help schools, colleges, LEAs, teachers associations and employers to determine closures or to



ratify absences. The Working Party has expressed serious doubts as to whether it should accept a role in this issue. It feels the complexity of relating what is 'major' and what is 'minor' in one tradition (where these terms may already be used) to others where celebration is less obligatory or occurs mostly at weekends, would require a judgement of Solomon. We also felt that it is for individual communities to determine or to indicate for themselves what is definitive for them, and of course in some traditions there is no single central body that can rule on this for the whole of their community.

This issue has, however, been raised again in a more specific manner, and the Working Party has been approached to see if it could draft a 'Basic English' type of short list, on which representatives of the different traditions might be asked to comment, in an attempt to ascertain if there is any feasible chance of developing a proposal that could be put, eg, to the RE Council or the World Congress of Faiths or the Standing Conference on Inter Faith Dialogue in Education. Would it, for instance, be possible to invite each religious tradition to nominate two religious celebrations on which it 'would be reasonable to expect pupils, students and teachers of that tradition to be excused attendance from school or college for the first day of the festival'? The question of whether staff absence would be with or without pay would of course constitute a further tricky complication, and even more so if such a list were extended to other forms of employment!

The Working Party has yet to discuss the question in a form as specific as this. But to spark off a vehement debate, to which you are all invited to contribute, a personal first draft from one of the editors might include:

Anniversary of the Birth of Baha'u'llah, Anniversary of the Ascension of Baha'u'llah,  
Vaisakhi, Parinirvana,  
Christmas, Easter,  
Birthday of Haile Selassie I, Ethiopian New Year's Day,  
Eid ul Fitr, Eid ul Adha,  
Yom Kippur, Pesah,  
Divali, Dussehra,  
Paryushana Parva, Mahavira Jayanti,  
Baisakhi, the Birthday of Guru Nanak,  
Farvardigan, Khordad Sal.

Who said producing a Calendar of Religious Festivals is repetitive?

Cherry Gould, David Rose, Peter Woodward



## *Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals*

**2002**

### **EDITORS' NOTES**

**You will notice that this edition of the Calendar - and of the Shap Journal – comes from a new address. Please make a note of the details wherever you locate such records and tell anybody else to whom you have previously given information about Shap about our moving house. The reason for the change is that the National RE Centre, which has played host to our Working Party for so many years now, has itself relocated to Church House, and it has proved convenient for Shap to move with it. There is no closer a link or tie up with the Church of England than before, and Shap continues to be an independent, educational charity, working in the field of World Religions, principally in education but also increasingly in other comparable fields. Details are as follows:**

**Address:** The Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education, Church House,  
Great Smith Street, London. SW1P 3NZ

**Telephone:** 020 7898 1494

**Fax:** 020 7898 1495

**Email:** [mike.berry@natsoc.org.uk](mailto:mike.berry@natsoc.org.uk)

There appears to be no resolution as yet of the uncertainty attaching to the use of Festival dates within the Sikh community. The debate about the use of a solar calendar as opposed to the previous lunar one continues, and at the time of writing all we can do is show what lunar dates are available or asterisk the months when they usually fall, since these are still the ones used by most British Sikh communities. Meanwhile we wait for further clarification from the Punjab. If the situation changes or further news becomes available, we will of course add a postscript.

Obtaining Jain dates a year in advance has also in the past been something of a problem, and, as with Hindu dates, these are often not only not known but not even fixed until after we go to print. An attempt to use a second source for Jain festival dates has led to emails to India, and the Institute of Jainology has now sent us a chart of their major festivals for the years 2002 to 2005. We are grateful for this help and are happy to include these dates in our booklet and wall chart.

Views have been expressed to the effect that the Baha'i symbol we have been using in our wallchart is inaccurate and that the correct version should be a symbol that incorporates rather more points than the five pointed star we have been showing.



Another viewpoint recommends nine stars unless space is short, when the use of five stars is permitted. The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby in association with the Inter-Faith Network for the UK comments in its major work of reference, *Religions in the UK*, that the star is nine pointed – ‘the number nine has particular significance for Baha’is being known as ‘the number of Bah’. The Arabic letters of the word ‘Bah’, the first part of the title of the founder of the Baha’i faith, Baha’u’llah, add up to nine in the Abjad notation’. It is perhaps also relevant that all purpose built Baha’i temples appear to be nine-sided. The Baha’i Community of the United Kingdom has helpfully confirmed that the number of points should be nine, and we hope to show this new symbol in the current wallchart. We are grateful both to the Multi-Faith Centre and to the Inter-Faith Network for their helpful support in this respect.

Two further issues are relevant to our readers, although in neither case has a decision been reached as yet, and both will be discussed at Shap’s summer meeting.

The first relates to the subject of Wicca and Pagan Festivals and raises the question of whether these are religious festivals or no, and so of whether they should be included in the Shap Calendar. One possible answer is to include textual material about the festivals in the Calendar and to reintroduce a line in the Wall chart for National Festivals, as we once had, or possibly for Secular Festivals. These could include New Year’s Day/Hogmanay, St George’s/David’s/Andrew’s/Patrick’s days, Shakespeare’s Birthday, Remembrance Day, the Week of Prayer for World Peace, etc., as well as the Pagan festivals such as the Wiccan Sabbats suggested to us (Imbolc – February 2<sup>nd</sup>; Ostara – March 21<sup>st</sup>; Beltaine – April 30<sup>th</sup>; Midsummer Solstice – June 21<sup>st</sup>; Lammas – August 1<sup>st</sup>; Mabon – September 21<sup>st</sup>; Samhain (Wiccan New Year) – October 31<sup>st</sup>; and Yule – December 21<sup>st</sup>), but whether Wicca or Pagan Celebrations should be called National or Secular is itself open to some question. If you have a contribution to make to this debate, we shall be glad to hear from you.

Secondly, attention has been drawn to the need for a Calendar of World Religions and their Festivals, illustrated with photographs or reproductions of paintings, etc. It would be helpful to us to know how many of you would find such a tool of use in your work. And similarly we would find it helpful to have feedback from our readers as to the use made of the wallchart in its larger and smaller formats, and whether these are really of value to centres of education and other places of work.

We shall be glad to hear from you on these or any further issues relating to the Calendar that you wish to raise.

Cherry Gould, David Rose, Peter Woodward  
June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2002



## *Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals*

**2003**

### **EDITORS' NOTES**

As we mentioned last year, Shap continues to be an independent, educational charity, working in the field of World Religions, principally in education but also increasingly in other comparable fields. Registered charity No. 271510. Details of the address where our office is now settled are as follows:

Address: The Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education, P.O. Box 38580, London. SW1P 3XF  
Telephone: 020 7898 1494  
Fax: 020 7898 1493  
Email: [mike.berry@natsoc.org.uk](mailto:mike.berry@natsoc.org.uk)

Please note that there are changes to the address (P.O. Box) and to the Postcode.

We have received a further comment about our Bah'ai and Buddhist symbols as shown on our wall chart, suggesting that the Buddhist one should be more like a wheel than the current one we show which looks rather like a flower, and that the Buddhist one should be modified to show the nine points blocked in. We will switch to these on the new wallchart and invite comments as to which is more appropriate for the future.

We have also received requests asking us to include a number of Namdhari Sikh festivals and some further Ismaili ones also. You will find therefore that there is some change to the material in Our Calendar booklet relating to Basant (Vasanta Panchami) and to Vaisakhi, and some additional material for Hola Mohalla/Mahalla and Asu da Mela. Ismaili material is still awaited and may not feature until next year's edition.

There is, at last, some important news about changes in the determination of Sikh festival dates. After years of discussion, the Nanakshahi calendar came into effect at Vaisakhi, 2003. This calendar was designed by a Canadian Sikh, Pal Singh Purewal. It means that the majority of Sikh dates will now be constant from year to year by reference to the Gregorian (i.e. secular) calendar. Previously Sikh dates were determined by the (Hindu) Bikrami calendar. The dates of three festivals, Hola Maholla, Bandhi Chhor Divas (i.e. Divali) and the Birthday of Guru Nanak will continue to be set on the basis of this older calendar. It is possible that some Sikh organisations may continue to observe other dates too, according to the older calendar. This year's shap calendar also takes into account for the first time the additional celebrations of the Namdhari Sikhs, one particular stream within the Sikh community.



Another main change this year is to the addition at the foot of the wall chart of a new line with a fresh heading: Some Other Notable Days. In the text of the Calendar booklet there will be an indication that these are National, Secular, Pagan or Other. A number of festivals have been relocated into this line on the wall chart along the lines of last year's editorial (New Year's Day/Hogmanay, St. Andrew's Day, St. David's Day, St. George's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Remembrance Sunday, the Inter Faith Week of Prayer for World Peace, Holocaust Day, Boxing Day) and a number of new ones have been introduced under the title of Pagan festivals (Samhain (Wiccan New Year) – October 31<sup>st</sup>; Yule – December 21<sup>st</sup>; Imbolc – February 2<sup>nd</sup>; Spring Equinox (Ostara) – March 21<sup>st</sup>; Beltaine – April 30<sup>th</sup>; Midsummer Solstice – June 21<sup>st</sup>; Lughnasadh (Lammas)) – August 1<sup>st</sup>; and the Autumn Equinox (Mabon) – September 21<sup>st</sup>).

These changes are mostly in response to requests we have received. We hope they will meet with approval, and expect it will evoke comment and discussion – please let us know your views.

Our editorial team has been slightly enlarged this year and we welcome on board Jamal Buaben who works at the Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham and Eleanor Nesbitt from the University of Warwick.

The Illustrated Calendar of Festivals we mentioned last year is now a reality and you will find on page 24 information about its appearance, cost and distribution. We suspect many of you will find it a valuable adjunct to the existing Calendar and wall charts.

We shall again be glad to hear from you on these or any further issues relating to the Calendar that you wish to raise.

Jamal Buaben  
Cherry Gould  
Eleanor Nesbitt  
David Rose  
Peter Woodward



## SHAP CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

2004

EDITORS' NOTES

### Shap Pictorial Calendar

Last year the Shap Working Party piloted the development of a pictorial calendar to complement our usual text based publications. This A4 production follows the calendar year - January to December. For each month there is a photograph with a few sentences of information included at the base of the image. When the calendar is open, it shows on one page the picture for the month, and on the other there is a monthly calendar that includes festival dates. The theme of last year's pictorial calendar was Festivals and virtually all of the print run was sold. The Working Party has therefore decided to continue this venture for the year 2005. The theme will be 'Faces' and their links with religion. When the calendar is published, we are sure many teachers will find the images useful for working with pupils in the classroom. Copies will be available in September from the usual Shap address. For further details see page XXX.

### Some Other Notable Dates

The introduction last year for the first time of a new row of 'Some Other Notable Dates' has drawn minimal comment from readers, and there has been little controversy over the inclusion in that line of a number of Pagan festivals. What controversy there has been has related to Namdhari Sikh celebrations, Shia Muslim festivals, Humanist memorials and the Israeli Independence Day.

### Israeli Independence Day

The latter, known as Yom Ha'atzma'ut, has caused a storm within Jewish and pro Israeli communities, in the first place because, having featured it for some years, we chose to delete it from the Calendar as being controversial and political; secondly because when we were pressurised to reintroduce it we included a phrase drawing attention to the fact that 'Many Arab voices, both Christian and Muslim, are currently raised in protest in Israel against its celebration'.

The Board of Deputies of British Jews has asked us to include the festival in our Calendar without this latter sentence or other critical comment. They argue that for Jews this is a religious celebration with a form of words that constitutes a liturgy; that Jews should determine whether or no it is appropriate to include it; that no other festival described



in the Calendar receives critical or evaluative comment; and that whether it features alongside other Jewish celebrations or in the 'Some Other Notable Festivals' row, it should be included without further comment.

Against this it has been argued that this is an essentially political day and so has no place in a Calendar of Religious Festivals, that its inclusion opens the way for other political and Independence Day celebrations to be listed, and that the violent rioting that attaches to it in Israel each year suggest its inclusion must be accompanied with some comment about these events and the controversial nature of its role in our Calendar.

The Calendar sub-group and the Shap Working Party as a whole have now considered this issue on a number of occasions and the day is featured in the Jewish row without further comment for the coming year, pending further debate. Your comments on the issue are invited.

### **Dates for Muslim Festivals**

We have found more difficulty than usual in obtaining Muslim festival dates for 2005. The dates shown have therefore been calculated by subtracting the usual eleven days from the dates for the previous year, although this is rarely completely accurate. This also serves to remind us of the complexity always associated with certain lunar festivals where the viewing of the moon at the last moment is the decisive factor in knowing when the festivities can begin.

### **The Hindu Calendar**

Finally, in the hope they may be helpful, we include the following notes on the Hindu Calendar, sent to us by Rasamandala Das of ISKCON. They serve to show how complex is the process of fixing accurately the dates of festivals, and why it is often difficult to obtain firm dates as early in the year as we would like. We are grateful to him for permission to include these notes.

We look forward to your comments.

Jabal Buaben, Cherry Gould, Eleanor Nesbitt, David Rose, Peter Woodward



**The Hindu Calendar** Finally, in the hope they may be helpful, we include the following notes on the Hindu Calendar, sent to us by Rasamandala Das of ISKCON. They serve to show how complex is the process of fixing accurately the dates of festivals, and why it is often difficult to obtain firm dates as early in the year as we would like. We are grateful to him for permission to include these notes.

### ***The Hindu Calendar***

**The Era** Various eras are used for numbering the years; the most common are the Vikrama Era, beginning with King Vikram in 57BCE and the Shaka Era, counting from 78 CE. In rituals the priest often announces the dates according to Kali Yuga. For these three systems, the year 2000 corresponds to 2057, 1922 and 5102 respectively (though the last date is the subject of some debate).

**The Year** The Hindu calendar is based on lunar months corresponding to the phases of the Moon. In one year there are twelve months of 29 days, accounting for a total of 354 days. The shortfall in days means that the date of each festival moves back 11 days each year. To rectify this, an extra, leap month is added about once every three years. The Hindu calendar is therefore luni-solar, with a precise month and an approximate year. The year — beginning with Makara Sankranti, the Sun's entrance into Capricorn — is divided into two halves and six seasons. There are various ways of reckoning the New Year. Most common is the day after the New Moon in the month of Chaitra or, in Gujarat, the day after the Diwali New Moon.

**The Month** Within each month, there are two 'fortnights', each consisting of 15 lunar days. The lunar day is called a '*tithi*'. Although the solar day and the lunar day technically begin at different times, each solar day is ascribed one particular *tithi* numbered from one to fifteen, either of the bright fortnight (waxing Moon) or the dark fortnight (waning Moon). The lunar day (*tithi*) ascribed to any solar day refers to the *tithi* current at the beginning of that solar day, which is reckoned to be at dawn, or in some traditions, up to about 90 minutes before.

Months average out to 29 days, so occasionally a day will be dropped (e.g. in one month, the fourth day of the waxing moon may be followed by the sixth). Less often, and due to the irregular motion of the moon, the same lunar day may be current on two successive solar days. For example, both Monday and Tuesday may correspond to the eleventh day of the waxing moon.

There are two main calendars. In the North of India, the month generally begins with the Full Moon, in the South with the New Moon. Festival days will still fall on the same



day, however (or very close) but the name of the month may be different. For example, Krishna's Birthday falls on the 8th day of the dark moon, but in the north it is in the month of Bhadra and in the South in Shravana.

**The Week** The week is divided into seven days, each corresponding to one of seven planets, exactly as in the Gregorian Calendar. No day is particularly special but each is related to a specific deity. For example, Monday is often associated with Shiva and Tuesday with Hanuman. Hindus may perform fasts, recite prayers, etc., to supplicate a particular deity on the corresponding day of the week.

**The Day** The day usually begins at dawn, or just before, depending on the astronomical and astrological systems used. The day is divided into 15 *muhurtas* of about 48 minutes, and the night the same. Particularly important are three times of the day — sunrise, noon and sunset, when the Brahmins traditionally chant the Gayatri mantra. The morning hours beginning with two *muhurtas* (about 1 hour) before dawn are considered most auspicious, especially for spiritual practices.

**Festivals** Since the Hindu calendar is basically lunar based, the exact dates of festivals change from year to year according to the Gregorian calendar — by a month between the earliest and latest possible dates. A few festivals — such as Makara Sankranti — are determined by the sun alone, and their Gregorian dates are the same each year (or, more precisely within one day due to the addition of one day each leap year.)

**Variance in Festival Dates** The Hindu calendar is called a *panchang*. In its different versions, festival dates will vary, but rarely by more than one day on either side. This is due to slight variations in calculating the Hindu calendar, most notably:

- a. Variance in determining the precise time of the beginning of the day (whether at dawn itself or some time before that.)
- b. Whether dates are determined for India or for the locality. Dates determined specifically for Britain, and used in some UK calendars, are usually calculated for London itself

The actual time of the beginning of any *tithi* is factually the same, but will correspond to different hours (for various time zones) and different days. The exact longitude where the day changes for any festival will vary for each one. For places east of that line, then the festival day will be one day later than those west of that longitude. Hence Janmashtami may fall on 20th August in London, but on 21st August in New Delhi.



- c. There is some dispute about the exact positions of the signs of the zodiac, based on differing opinions as to the precise size of the *ayanamsa* (the difference between the tropical and sidereal zodiacs). It is reckoned to be, at the moment, about 23 degrees.

Additionally, in Britain especially, some celebrations may also occur at the weekend rather than during the week when many are working. Please check before arranging visits to temples, etc.

© ISKCON Educational Services

We look forward to your comments.

Jabal Buaben  
Cherry Gould  
Eleanor Nesbitt  
David Rose  
Peter Woodward



## SHAP CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

2005

### EDITORS' NOTES

Since the time several years ago when the Shap Calendar was placed into the hands of a 'sub-group' of Shap members, attempts have been made to draw on three sources for editorial comment as the preface to the actual business of showing relevant dates. One source has related to major issues that have inevitably called for attention, either in world news of major developments in determining festival dates (e.g. as with Sikh dates, many of which are now fixed and remain constant each year), or in relation to major issues of a controversial nature (such as the inclusion of secular celebrations, independence days, and 'pagan' festivals).

A second field stems from correspondence received, mostly via Mike Berry or another of our Officers, when topics such as days off school or work for Orthodox or Rastafarian Christmas, or the production of lists of major festivals in each faith that can help industry predict staff absence have been suggested and discussed.

The third relates to comment on relevant issues from individual members of the editorial team, who are asked each year to draw on their experience and offer nuggets of information from either their own background or their academic interests. This is a field which fluctuates each year according to their current research, their travels and their preoccupation with other interests.

This has been a particularly fallow year for all three sources! The only issues raised in correspondence have been queries about the accuracy of certain dates. The only topic raised by members features a plea to remind readers of the uncertainty relating to Muslim dates, where the necessity of the sighting of the moon before a festival can proceed makes totally accurate prediction a near impossibility.

An interesting byline here is a statement in one particular Muslim Calendar, only recently received, to the effect that "ISLAMIC DATES BEGIN AT SUNSET THE PRECEDING EVENING". Whether this relates to all Muslim festivals or only to some needs to be clarified. While Muslim festival dates, which are essentially lunar, normally move back through the year by ten or eleven days each solar year, it is clear from our experience in determining Muslim dates a year ago that there is considerable diversity between dates given in various Muslim Calendars and in different parts of the world. Here again, clarity and uniformity are not easy to achieve.

In much the same way, Jewish festival dates, as with the weekly Jewish Sabbath, also commence at sunset on the evening preceding the dates shown, and often terminate at



'nightfall', somewhat later than sunset, 'so that the sweetness of celebration lingers on into the coming week'.

Against this panoply of change and uncertainty it is interesting to note the pattern of the number of festival dates that DO NOT CHANGE from year to year. Baha'i, Rastafarian and Pagan dates, National and Secular dates, many Japanese and some Chinese, and certain Christian dates (but by no means all) remain constant each year. Sikh dates too, apart from Guru Nanak's Birthday, Hola Mohalla and Bandi Chhor Divas (Divali), now widely follow a fixed and so a predictable calendar from year to year. Zoroastrian dates use three Calendars, one of which (the Fasli) remains constant while the others (the Shenshai and the Qadimi) move backward just one day each leap year.

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!

Jabal Buaben, Cherry Gould, Roger Howarth, Eleanor Nesbitt, David Rose,  
Peter Woodward



## SHAP CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

2006

Editors' Notes

### Changes to Shap Calendar Editorial Team

The Shap Calendar in its present booklet and chart form is noted for its clear, authoritative and informative approach to dating the festivals within twelve traditions. Much of the credit for the present format and concept must go to two of the original editors who retired from the role last year. Thanks and appreciation must go to Peter Woodward and Cherry Gould who were formative in rejuvenating and re-shaping the Shap calendar some years ago. Peter has now decided to step down from his overall editorial role and Cherry is also taking a break from membership of the team. The Shap Working Party, along with many other readers who rely upon the calendar each year, is indebted to them both for the way in which they have been meticulous in searching out and compiling the dates each year.

These changes mean that Roger Howarth and Lynne Broadbent have now joined the two experts Eleanor Nesbitt and David Rose as members of the Editorial Team.

This year's calendar continues in its established format. Changes to personnel will not affect the business of showing relevant dates and providing the key information which supports the festivals.

There have been, however, several items of correspondence received in the Shap office which have come from sources outside of education. The wider audience using the Shap calendar, from which there has been correspondence, include the NHS, H.M. Revenue and Customs, Barnardo's, and a member of the Pagan community.

The inclusion of 'Some Other Notable Dates' has drawn no adverse comment from readers so it will continue to be a part of the chart. Whilst there has been little controversy over the inclusion of Pagan festivals, there has been correspondence about the way certain Pagan festivals are described. The editorial team would welcome further reflection here and intend to address any changes in the 2007/2008 calendar when there has been time to take further advice. This is also true of controversy over the possible inclusion of July 12th as a Protestant festival. The editorial team is taking further advice and consulting in order to address any changes necessary in next year's calendar.

Correspondence has also drawn attention to the fact that Universities and the NHS, like schools, continue to consider the government's inclusion agenda and the knock on



effect that the celebration of particular festivals can have upon examination and semester arrangements. The question has been asked, as to whether or not the calendar could give an indication of the most significant festivals celebrated within each religious tradition which are normally taken as a holiday. This is an interesting issue which raises other concerns, and is one the editors will discuss. Your views on this would be welcome.

The 2007 Calendar reflects changes made by the Roman Catholic Church in July 2006 to the dating of three of the Holy Days of Obligation within that tradition. The celebration of Epiphany, Ascension and Corpus Christi have transferred, from their hitherto normal weekday celebration to the nearest Sunday. The entries in the calendar show this difference. At the time of going to press there was no indication that the Anglican Church would follow suit.

Finally, a comment about the fixing of dates for festivals. Days that have been fixed in accordance with the Gregorian calendar (i.e. the arithmetical solar calendar that is in general use internationally) have been printed in bold so that users know that these will be the dates in future years too. The dates concerned include Baha'i, Pagan and Rastafarian dates and most Christian dates. However, the 'Eastern' churches still follow the older Julian calendar and, in any case, the complex calculations determining Easter (and dates dependent on it such as Lent and Pentecost/Whitsun) in both 'Western' and 'Eastern' churches involve reference to the lunar calendar.

In a break with previous tradition all Sikh dates too (apart from Gum Nanak's Birthday, Hola Mohalla and Bandi Chhor Divas i.e. Divali) are now set (in the Nanakshahi calendar) to conform with the Gregorian calendar. It is worth reminding ourselves that (for example) Hindu, Jewish and Muslim dates do not 'change' - they are set by the calendars concerned, which are calculated on a different basis from the Gregorian calendar.

Eleanor Nesbitt, David Rose, Lynne Broadbent, Roger Howarth



## SHAP CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

2007

Editors' Notes

### The 2007-2008 Calendar

This year's calendar sees a change to our established format. The aim is to make the calendar as accessible as possible to our users whilst ensuring we provide an interesting and modern layout. Much of the information we provide about festivals remains the same but there have been revisions, in particular to the Pagan entries. These have been made in discussion with the Pagan Federation. The text for Holy week has also been amended to reflect a more accurate understanding of Christian belief about Jesus. Discussion with colleagues and our advisers has brought about the addition of more information about some festivals and changes to the dating of one or two minor festivals.

The Editorial Team has responded to the various items of correspondence received last year and has made changes where it felt justified in doing so. We always welcome comments from users, especially if they improve the information we provide and help us to reach a wider audience.

It is worth referring again this year to changes made by the Roman Catholic Church in July 2006 to the dating of three of the Holy Days of Obligation within that tradition. The celebration of Epiphany, Ascension and Corpus Christi have transferred, from their hitherto normal weekday celebration, to the nearest Sunday. The entries in this 2008 calendar show this difference, although this year Epiphany falls on a Sunday, therefore, the Roman Catholic Tradition, Anglican and Western non-catholic traditions will all celebrate on the same day.

We also reiterate our annual comment about the fixing of dates for festivals. Days that have been fixed in accordance with the Gregorian calendar (i.e. the arithmetical solar calendar that is in general use internationally) have been printed in bold so that users know that these will be the dates in future years too. The dates concerned include Baha'i, Pagan and Rastafarian dates and most Christian dates. However, the 'Eastern' churches still follow the older Julian calendar and, in any case, the complex calculations determining Easter (and dates dependent on it such as Lent and Pentecost/Whitsun) in both 'Western' and 'Eastern' churches involve reference to the lunar calendar. In a break with previous tradition all Sikh dates too (apart from Guru Nanak's Birthday, Hola Mohalla and Bandi Chhor Divas i.e. Divali) are now set (in the Nanakshahi calendar) to conform with the Gregorian calendar. It is worth reminding ourselves that (for example)



Hindu, Jewish and Muslim dates do not change' - they are set by the calendars concerned, which are calculated on a different basis from the Gregorian Calendar.

Finally, we can draw your attention to the new revised Shap Website [www.shap.org.uk](http://www.shap.org.uk) . The Shap website now features a glossary of words from world religions and will very soon have an audio file attached to each so that teachers and students can learn how words are pronounced. Also, Shap offers a free advice service with regard to questions about world religions and this can be accessed through the website.

The main festivals for each month are flagged during that month on the website of the Religious Education council (<http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/>).



## SHAP CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

2008

Editors' Notes

### The 2008-2009 Calendar

This year's calendar continues in the format established last year. Feedback has led us to believe that we have improved the accessibility of the calendar whilst modernising the layout. We are again grateful to our colleagues from within the different traditions who provide us with the information needed to put together this calendar well in advance of the publication date.

The Editorial Team has responded to the various items of correspondence received last year and has made changes where it felt justified in doing so. We always welcome comments from users, especially if they improve the information we provide and help us to reach a wider audience. However, little revision has been made to the texts this year, although we have normalised the Pagan entries so that they distinguish between Wiccan and Druid celebrations. This has come about after discussion with our Pagan advisor.

We must continue to remind ourselves that there is no one standard time when all religious festivals and celebrations begin. Bahá'í, Jewish and Muslim holidays begin at sunset on the evening of the day prior to the date given in this calendar.

Days that have been fixed in accordance with the Gregorian calendar (i.e. the arithmetical solar calendar that is in general use internationally) have been printed in bold so that users know that these will be the dates in future years too. The dates concerned include Bahá'í, Pagan and Rastafarian dates and most Christian dates. However, the 'Eastern' churches still follow the older Julian calendar and, in any case, the complex calculations determining Easter (and dates dependent on it such as Lent and Pentecost/Whitsun) in both 'Western' and 'Eastern' churches involve reference to the lunar calendar.

Calendars themselves vary in length and adoption. The Bahá'í calendar is made up of 19 months, each with 19 days, with an additional four or five days added each year so that observances will coincide with the Gregorian calendar. This is how Bahá'í dates remain the same each year. Sikh dates too (apart from Guru Nanak's Birthday, Hola Mohalla and Bandi Chhor Divas i.e. Divali) are now set (in the Nanakshahi calendar) to conform with the Gregorian calendar. It is worth reminding ourselves that (for example) Hindu, Jewish and Muslim dates do not 'change' - they are set by the calendars concerned, which are calculated on a different basis from the Gregorian Calendar.

Complementing this Shap calendar is the Shap Pictorial Calendar which is published separately and contains a full colour photograph for each month. This is available from the Shap office. The Shap website [www.shapworkingparty.org.uk](http://www.shapworkingparty.org.uk) now features a glossary of words from world religions and an audio file attached to each so that teachers and students can learn how words are pronounced. The glossary is currently



been extended. Also, Shap offers a free advice service with regard to questions about world religions and this can be accessed through the website.

The main festivals for each month are also flagged during that month on the website of the Religious Education council (<http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/>)

### **Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals**



## SHAP CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

### 2009: Editors' Notes

#### The current Calendar – September 2009 to December 2010

The team producing the current Calendar has changed and grown somewhat this year. Roger Howarth continues to ferret out dates for Christian festivals, and has now taken on Buddhist festivals as well, but has passed overall editorship of the Calendar back to Peter Woodward. Eleanor Nesbitt controls the search for material relating to Hindu, Sikh and Jain festivals. Clive Lawton, who has assumed for the time being the key role of overall Chair of Shap, has still found time to provide us with Jewish dates and a few important amendments to the text relating to Pesakh and Sukkot. Roger Butler has time on his hands now he has stepped down from the role of Chair (!) and has produced material and dates for Islamic celebrations. And Wendy Dossett, Secretary of the Working Party, has volunteered to provide what we need for Japanese and Chinese festivals. What a great piece of teamwork.

Those interested in the history of the Calendar will find much material about it in the interesting survey of the Shap Working Party contained in the essay (*Shap:A Brief History*) by Mary Hayward earmarked on the Home Page of the Shap web site ([www.shap.org](http://www.shap.org)). In addition there is a great deal of material about the nature and content of Calendars in previous annual editorials to the Shap Calendar, and we hope to follow up the suggestion of compiling the useful suggestions made there over the years into a future article for the website.

The Shap Journals for the years 1994/5 to 2009 are currently available for study on the web site and back numbers for the years 1978 to 1993/4 are in process of being scanned for future insertion there. If any readers have copies of material relating to years previous to 1978, please send an email to [woodwardpp@gmail.com](mailto:woodwardpp@gmail.com) or to Mike Berry at the Shap Office so that we may seek to add this as well in our effort to achieve a full record of Shap material.

The Shap Journal for this year will no longer appear in printed form but will feature without charge on the Shap website along with the other issues of the Journal. Please study it there since it contains as always a host of useful and interesting material, revisiting this year the theme of 'food, faith and community'. The Calendar with Wall Chart and plastic insert will continue in printed format (price £6.50, as previously) distributed from the Shap Office, as will the always exciting Shap Pictorial Calendar (price £7.00). Please see the Shap advertisement on page XXX for further details.



We hope you will find these tools helpful and of interest in your work and research. Comments and suggestions welcome as always, to help us improve the relevance of the materials we produce.



## SHAP CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

### 2010: Editorial Notes

If readiness for change is seen as a sign of good health, the Shap Calendar is clearly in pristine condition! Members of last year's team are still producing it and are all pulling their considerable weight, ably supported by the help of David Rose, who is researching Buddhist dates and data for us; there are new materials on three under-represented traditions (Shi'a, Zoroastrian and Far Eastern); tricky decisions have been made about the spelling of technical terms in Asian traditions and which festivals to include/exclude; and the three column experimental format of the last two years has been transformed into a single column version to assist usage, editing and accuracy.

Two further developments in respect of the Calendar, which were hinted at last year, have come into being: The Shap website ([www.shap.org](http://www.shap.org)) now offers access to a compilation of the editorials from all previous Calendars that were available to us – nearly forty all told. And it also contains a historical account of the development of the Calendar and a précis, substantial in itself, arranged thematically, of much of the material from these editorials.

That apart, the important things remain the same: the Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals, first produced at Borough Road College, Isleworth, in 1969 – over 40 years ago – seeks to serve the UK community by providing thoroughly researched, reliable, accurate, and delightfully interesting and insightful data about festivals in all the world's major religions. It is valued in a wide range of useful spheres, educational, social, medical, commercial, and so on. Please use it regularly and recommend it to others – or contact us with challenges to modify it, where you know of areas that still need improvement.

### *Muslim festivals*

In the wide ranging field of Islam our text for all Muslim festivals has been reviewed and in some cases modified, the observance of Yaum Arafah (the standing all day at Arafat during the Hajj) has been introduced, the phraseology for Ashura in particular has been revised, a note has been added about Shi'a observance of Lailat-ul-Bara'h (the Night of Forgiveness) which coincides with the birthday of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam, and a further Shi'a commemoration, Eid ul Ghadeer (the Festival of the Pool), has been introduced, along with explanatory text produced with the help of members of Shi'a communities in London (see pages xxx and xxx).



Among Sunni Muslims the practice of celebrating the birthday of the Prophet arose several centuries after his lifetime and has always been controversial amongst Sunni scholars. There are two aspects to the controversy: first whether it is permissible to celebrate the event, and secondly, amongst those who believe it is permissible, how it should be celebrated. Those who are against celebrating this day regard it as an unacceptable innovation having no basis in the *Qur'an* or in the teaching or practice of the Prophet. Among scholars who are happy that the day should be marked there is concern that there should be no un-Islamic aspects in its celebration. In spite of these concerns the day is widely celebrated within the Muslim world and is a public holiday in most Muslim countries. We are accordingly retaining its place in our Calendar, but will welcome comment from readers about its inclusion.

Whilst Muslim historians are unanimous in their understanding that the twelfth of the month Rabi' Al-Awwal was the day of the death of the Prophet, there is less certainty as to the precise day of his birth.

Ithna Asheri (12 Imam) Shi'a Muslims celebrate the birthday of the Prophet five days later than Sunnis on Rabi' Al-Awwal 17. This date also coincides with the birthday of the 6<sup>th</sup> Shi'a Imam, Ja'far al-Sadiq.

### ***Zoroastrian celebrations***

In the field of Zoroastrian studies we have received welcome support from the organisation 'Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe Incorporated' - ZTFE for short - and have increased the number of their celebrations listed to ten, with splendid help from Malcolm M. Deboo, the President of ZTFE. For further information contact their iconic Centre at the 'Zoroastrian Centre for Europe', 440 Alexandra Avenue, Harrow, HA2 9TL ([secretary@ztfе.com](mailto:secretary@ztfе.com) , or [www.ztfе.com](http://www.ztfе.com) ).

It may be helpful to show here the full list of Zoroastrian festivals now included, especially as the national community operates with two different calendars, which results in four of these festivals being celebrated twice, on widely different dates.

Fravardigan / Muktrad (Iranian Zoroastrian and Parsee Zoroastrian - Shenshai)  
Jamsheedi NoRuz (Iranian Zoroastrian New Year) and Shenshai Navroze (Parsee New Year)  
Khordad Sal (Iranian Zoroastrian) and Khordad Sal (Shenshai)  
Zaratosht no diso (Iranian Zoroastrian) and Zaratosht no diso (Shenshai)  
Jashn-e Sadeh (Iranian Zoroastrian)  
Ava mah parab (Shenshai)  
Adar mah parab (Shenshai)



Jashn-e Tirgan (Iranian Zoroastrian)  
Fravardin mah parab (Shenshai)  
Jashn-e Mehergan (Iranian Zoroastrian)

In ancient times Iran followed a calendar of twelve months, each of 30 days, and they celebrated their New Year on the Spring equinox. The origins of the traditional Zoroastrian religious calendar lie in the second century CE when, by imperial decree, Iran adopted a 365 day calendar instead of the previous 360 day one. (Even then, this new calendar did not account for the quarter day that relates to the modern Leap Year.) To ensure that NoRuz, the New Year festival, fell on the vernal equinox, an additional 30 day month used to be added to the calendar every 120 years by the Zoroastrians in Iran. Following the Arab conquest of Iran, which brought with it religious and political turbulence, the Zoroastrians overlooked the need to add this extra month, and still today the traditional Parsee Zoroastrian calendar (Shenshai) drifts one day back every four years, since it does not account for the leap year. The modern Iranian Zoroastrian calendar, which is in use today, accounts for the leap year day and has fixed dates which remain constant. Out of loyalty to tradition, however, many Parsee Zoroastrians felt unwilling to adopt the new leap year calendar, because it reminded them of when Iran was once a Zoroastrian nation. As a consequence the UK Zoroastrian community has ended up with the new year starting on two different days in relation to the Gregorian calendar, one on the vernal equinox around 21<sup>st</sup> March and the other in mid August.

### ***Festivals in some Asian traditions***

The number of days in the year that have religious significance presents a major challenge for the compilers of any multi-faith calendar. Moreover, within most faith communities there are celebrations and commemorations that are specific to distinct cultural or religious groupings. Among Hindus millions may celebrate the birth anniversary of a number of spiritual leaders who are unknown to equal millions of other Hindus. For this reason the Shap calendar normally includes only the dates for *major* Hindu festivals - those which all or most Hindu communities celebrate. Another factor, however, has also been taken into account in making our selection for the Shap calendar: festivals which are regularly celebrated and are open to public view. Accordingly, Ratha Yatra, a festival celebrated in Puri in the Indian state of Orissa and unknown in other parts of India, is included because of its high profile among UK Hindus. Although the Ratha Yatra celebrations in London are organised by a single, specific grouping, (the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)), they draw participants from a wider Hindu spectrum.



Over recent decades the number of South Indian / Sri Lankan Hindus in the UK has grown, in relation to the longer settled communities of north Indian background, and it is likely that, for this reason, the calendar's editorial team may need to consider including other of their festivals and dates in the future.

Not only are Hindu festivals very numerous but the ways in which their names are represented in the *roman* alphabet are also diverse. The challenge faced by authors writing in English on Hindu issues is complex, for a number of reasons:

(a) the *roman* alphabet is NOT used with phonetic consistency in English (whereas *Indic* languages are written phonetically in the scripts concerned); one has only to consider the difficulties that native users have on first reading/hearing some English place names, or the range of possible pronunciations for 'ough', or the multitude of homophones (such as 'foresight', 'Forsyte'; 'insight' and 'incite') to perceive the nature of this problem;

(b) Indian languages and their alphabets include a number of distinctions that are not made in English (between 'd' and 'dh', for instance, and between 'd' and 't' when pronounced with the tip of the tongue in different positions on the palate); in fact, the conventions of scholars of Indian languages (which carefully represent each of these consonants) often diverge from English spellings that are now in widespread use; and in many cases the popular forms are less likely to be mispronounced by readers who are unfamiliar with the language concerned than are the scholarly transliterations (especially when these have been stripped of their diacritic marks, which are in any case so off-putting to the 'lay' reader).

(c) vowels too present problems! On seeing an 'a', readers often pronounce it like the 'a' in 'far', whereas in the *Indic* word concerned it may be so 'short' as to be almost inaudible. English speakers are unlikely to know that speakers of Hindi will pronounce 'Rama' as 'Ram' in e.g. the name of his birthday, 'Ramanavami'/'Ramnavmi', whereas in 'Raksha Bandhan'/'Raksha Bandhana' the only long 'a' ('a' as in 'far') is the second one in 'Raksha'. To give another example, in 'Ratha Yatra', the only long 'a' is the first one in 'Yatra'. ('Ratha can sound very like the English word 'rut'.)

It will be clear from the above that the editors of the Shap calendar, faced with such dilemmas, have felt forced to use their own judgement in the spellings we have adopted in a variety of cases, even at some risk of being less consistent than we would ideally wish. It also follows that there are good reasons for our inconsistencies, whether they be within this calendar or between transliterations in this calendar and the spellings that may be found in other contexts.



Furthermore, it is not only the spelling of a festival but also its name that may vary, and indeed both may well change over a period of time. So the autumn festival of lights is both '*Divali*' and '*Deepavali*' (*Dipavali*). Both names invoke the little wick light ('*diva*/'*deep*'). However, in recent years users of the calendar will have noticed that the festival also has a new name in the Sikh calendar. This is '*Bandi Chhor Divas*', literally the day ('*divas*') when prisoners ('*bandi*') were freed ('*chhor*'). The new name makes the point that it happened to be on the day of the (Hindu) Divali festival that the Sikhs' sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind, was released from gaol (though admittedly only on condition that a number of Hindu rajas would be released at the same time.)

This name-change highlights another range of complexities with which some users of the calendar may be unfamiliar. One is the fact that calendars record historical relationships between faith communities, even when from their titles the festivals seem to be apparently distinct. (Examples could include the linked, albeit uneasy, connections between Samhain, Hallowe'en and All Saints' Day, or between Pesach and Maundy Thursday, for example.) It would be nice to be able to explain, therefore, that Sikhs have now adopted a name that conveys the particular significance of Divali for their community. (Indeed *Bandi Chhor Divas* is the name that appears on the Nanakshahi calendar which was authorised in 2003 for use among Sikhs, in place of the Bikrami calendar which they shared with Punjabi and many other Hindus.) However, not only do the majority of Sikhs not use the new name but many have probably not yet come across it, and there is ongoing disagreement among influential Sikh bodies over which calendar to follow.

In early 2010 discussions on this issue were held in Amritsar, Punjab, and a decision was reached to reduce the gap between the Nanakshahi calendar and the older Bikrami calendar, with the result that – officially, as well as widely in continuing practice – some further dates would then correspond to the Bikrami calendar and not have the same date each year by the secular (western) Gregorian calendar. The dates thus proposed included the annual celebration of the birth of Guru Gobind Singh and the commemoration of the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev. However, later in 2010, the most authoritative Sikh elective body in Pakistan affirmed its support for the Nanakshahi calendar in its original (2003) form. Sikh practice is likely to continue to be diverse for some time to come.

Additional entries to the Shap calendar have also been made in the restoration of the Japanese celebration of Hinamatsuri to the Calendar, and of three Chinese celebrations (The Mid-Autumn [Rabbit in the Moon] Festival, the Double-Ninth [Picnic in a High Place] Festival and the Double Seventh [Herd Boy and Weaving Maid] Festival). Entries in the Calendar's Index will show these as Chung Ch'iu, Ch'ung Yang, and Ch'i Hou Chieh,



respectively, though we are considering an alternative transliteration of terms (Pinyin instead of Wade-Giles) for next year.

In the face of such baffling complexity, panic not! Festivals are lively and living things, and with the help of the dated entries below, and more from the Shap Book of Festivals in World Religions (see page xxx), they can be observed, celebrated and enjoyed, which is their prime role and function in religion. So enjoy your observing and your celebrating!

### ***Pagan celebrations of Beltane (Wiccan) / Beltaine (Druid)***

In the past there appears to have been a fuzzy boundary across the British Isles, north of which people leapt over the Beltane fire, or drove their cattle between two fires (it was a pastoralist custom), and south of which they danced round maypoles (as an agrarian custom). Nowadays Pagans mix it up and do both, depending on the practicality of obtaining a maypole or lighting a fire. (See '*Stations of the Sun*' by Ronald Hutton).

### ***Heathen festivals***

In addition to the Wiccan and Druid festivals now included in our calendar, there are also 'Heathen' festivals for communities and individuals who celebrate different cycles of seasonal holidays, based usually on their cultural affiliations, local traditions, and relationships with particular gods. There appears to be no fixed calendar of Heathen festival dates. The three Heathen festivals most commonly celebrated in the UK are *Winter Nights* – usually celebrated in October or November, *Yule* – a twelve day festival that begins around the time of the winter solstice, and a festival for the Anglo-Saxon goddess *Eostre* in the spring.

Edited for the Shap Working Party by: Peter Woodward

With unstinted help from:  
Roger Butler  
Wendy Dossett  
John Hinnells  
Roger Howarth  
Clive Lawton  
Eleanor Nesbitt  
David Rose



## **SHAP CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS**

### **2011: Editorial Notes**

Welcome to the first ever version of our Shap Calendar that makes no use of the process of printing – at our end at least. Instead we have adopted the technological magic that brings our materials to you via the wonders of email. Please note that at last we are attempting to do something creative for the environment!

We hope this new emailed Calendar will continue to be an invaluable tool for the teacher and pupil, nurse and patient, shopkeeper and customer - and for so many other categories of purchaser who have used it in the past. And note how much cheaper it now is . . .

### **Contents of the emailed documents**

In essence the format of the Calendar booklet remains the same: a Word document with dates for an eighteen month period; but the A2 Wallchart, which many have found so useful, has disappeared, since the printing of A2 or even A3 documents is beyond the ability of most home and even many school and college printers. Instead the Wallchart format has been extended (in a variety of colours) to three new pages of A4 in pdf format, each covering six months. These can be used individually; or, if preferred, they can be posted side by side to replace in part the presentation the Wallchart gave.

The Pictorial Calendar is no longer a separate entity; but an equally striking presentation of twelve colour photographs from David Rose's superb collection is now part of the Calendar package. These photos illustrate different festivals and other aspects of worship, and are supported by extended captions of an informative and evocative nature, as before. Used alongside the three A4 pdf pages they aim to fill the gap left by the Pictorial Calendar in what we hope will be a helpful and creative development. Good quality paper or card recommended if printing either/both of these.

Readers will find that the Index/List of entries has been moved to the back of this booklet – the normal area where you would expect to find an Index and references. In this new email format it seems more sensible to show the references by date of celebration rather than by page numbers. These numbers were always the last feature of the editing process and haste in preparation has sometimes led to last minute error, which we now hope in this way to avoid.

### **Prices and Invoices**



The cost of this year's emailed Calendar package is £3.50. At this price permission is given to use the materials throughout the classrooms or wards of a single school or hospital, etc.; but where an organisation wishes to spread this usage over several buildings or departments, bulk purchase/multi-site usage can reduce the price to £2.50 per site.

Please see the **INVOICE** accompanying the Calendar for details of how to pay. Credit transfer into our Shap Working Party account is best all round, but arrangements for transfer of funds via Paypal have also been made. Cheques by post are still acceptable at present for those unable to use credit transfer methods.

The last 300 copies of the Shap Book 'Festivals in World Religions' have now been reduced from £22.50 to £10.00, plus £2.50 p&p. Copies can be ordered at [www.rmep.co.uk](http://www.rmep.co.uk) or by calling 01603 785 925. Please quote SWP11. Super chance!

**Edited for the ShapWorking Party by  
Peter Woodward**

**with contributions by**

**Roger Butler, Wendy Dossett, Mary Hayward,**

**John Hinnells, Clive Lawton, Eleanor Nesbitt and David Rose**

### **More Notes from the Editor**

The earliest versions of the Shap Calendar (from 1974 on!) were accompanied by sets of bibliographies and support materials for the unfolding field of world religions. This 'Shap Mailing' eventually led to the separation of the Calendar from the developing 'Shap Journal'. Sadly the Journal is no more, so it seems appropriate to return to our origins and incorporate some 'enrichment materials' in the form of the articles that follow – there's value for money for you, and at no extra charge!

Our especial thanks to Ursula King and Peggy Morgan, long time members of the Shap Working Party, for their help in providing these. And of course to Clive Lawton, the retiring Chair of the Working Party, whose seminal thoughts provide much of the stimulus for the following article.

### **It's Just One Day After Another**

The trouble for Cinderella was that her Big Day ended at midnight; it was the royal search (for the elegant foot which would fit the glass slipper) that went on for days and days throughout the hours of daylight that led eventually to joy and celebrations . . .



Midnight for most of us resident in the UK is indeed an important time. It is the instant when one day ends and another begins. But this is not universal, as our contemporary culture of shift workers and others who work through the night will bear witness. And in a multi-cultural, multi-religious scenario we find an incredibly wide range of examples of diversity and variety, relating not only to the start and end of the day but also to the length and timing of the week, the month, the year – and in particular the weekly day of rest/celebration.

Such variety is particularly evident in any study – such as what follows below - of the religious traditions covered in the Shap Calendar. For a seminal discussion of this topic, look at the Shap Calendar Editorials - particularly those written by Clive Lawton (summarised in an article on the Shap website – see [www.shap.org](http://www.shap.org), Home Page – ‘For a tour on the development of the Calendar . . .’). Clive is currently retiring from his distinctive leadership role as Chair of the Shap Working Party – a post he has held for many years now - and we thank and honour him for his pithy humour and the creative way he has led the Working Party through its recent difficult valleys into the fresh pastures of its current activity.

So, for instance, as he first pointed out in the 1989 Calendar Editorial, ‘If we wish to be properly aware of the outlook of others it is important to recognise that a month can last nineteen days, that there is nothing natural about a seven-day week, that there is nothing obvious about starting a day at midnight and that we are not only in the twentieth century but at one and the same time also in the fifteenth century, the second century, the twenty-sixth and the fifty-eighth.’

The reference to a month lasting nineteen days is to the **Baha’i** calendar, which is made up of 19 months, each with 19 days (with an additional four or five days added each year so that observances will coincide with the Gregorian calendar). Furthermore for the Baha’i community the week is held to start on Saturday and end on Friday. But since each day begins at the sunset of the previous day (and then ends at the sunset of the current day), the Baha’i day of rest is officially Friday, the seventh day of their week (though lasting from Thursday sunset till Friday evening). This corresponds in part, interestingly enough, with Islamic custom and practice, in that Friday is ‘the best’ (and consequently the most important) day of the week for Muslims too.

**Buddhist** communities by contrast mostly observe a ‘common’ day that ends and begins at midnight, but this is not universal throughout Buddhism and certain days and festivals end and begin at dusk. The variety of ‘*uposathas*’, days of special observance and spiritual discipline, is enormous and their location in the calendar is often affected by the phases of the moon and also by the varying customs found in both Mahayana and Theravada traditions.



As if this were not complicated enough, **Chinese** calendars are perhaps the most complex of all in terms of fixing dates for festivals since they combine traditional lunar-solar (*yin-yang li*) approaches with the subsequent introduction of Hindu, Muslim and much later Gregorian versions. The latter is very widely used today by Chinese communities both in China and the UK/USA, but unifying it with the traditional calendars remains a major dilemma. Against this stands out the simplicity of having twelve animals that are used in the naming of years, and the regularity of the day's finishing/starting at midnight - or in some cases at 11.00 p.m. (Gregorian calendar time).

**Christian** festivals too have their complexities, not least with the dating of Easter and Christmas in Eastern and Western traditions. Attempts to unify these processes have been made from time to time, but so far without success, and Eastern Christian festival dates remain up to a fortnight later than Western ones. And while most Christian traditions normally perceive their days as lasting from midnight onwards, there are a number of sabbatarian traditions which follow Jewish custom and celebrate the Sabbath from Friday sunset until Saturday evening. Some Orthodox and Catholic ceremonies also commence on a Saturday evening rather than at midnight.

For **Hindus**, whose calendars are nearly as complex as those of the Chinese, the day begins neither at midnight nor at sunset but at or just before dawn. It is divided into thirty periods (*muhurtas*), each lasting for about 48 minutes. The most important *muhurtas* of the day are sunrise, noon and sunset, and at each of these Brahmin priests traditionally chant the Gayatri mantra as part of their daily devotions.

In many ways **Jain** observances follow Hindu patterns, but the eras of Hindu mythology are as nothing when compared with Jain belief about the twelve aeons evident in their clockwise wheel of time. Six of these aeons fall in the ascending side of the wheel, denoting happiness, and six in the descending cycle of misery. We apparently live today in the fifth aeon of the latter state! And Mahavira, the great leader of the present age, who was born in 599 BCE, was the 24<sup>th</sup> and last of the great Tirthankaras of the current aeon. So how far back we have to go to reach the beginning of the first aeon is baffling, especially for those of us who have been nurtured in more recent and younger traditions.

**Japanese** calendars inherited much of their character from Chinese ones, and eventually adopted the alternative of the Gregorian system for business and many other uses. The complexity of the language and the names of days and months in use here make generalisations and conclusions more risky than ever – but also more challenging and exciting for those who have specialised enough to venture into this territory.



The **Jewish** day commences at sunset each evening, and the Sabbath in particular begins at **sunset** on a Friday evening, and finishes shortly after sunset on the Saturday, once three medium sized stars are visible in the night sky. To ensure that Sabbath regulations are fully observed the Sabbath is deemed to last until night has fallen, when a service of farewell to the Sabbath, *havdalah*, marks the fact that 'normal' daily life can now recommence. Similarly other festivals and new moons may last for slightly longer than 24 hours – and some indeed for a full eight days!

Like the Sabbath (and other) Jewish celebrations, **Muslim** festivals also commence in the evening before the dates indicated on Muslim calendars – and ours. But where Jewish festivals begin at sunset, Muslim ones depend on authenticated sightings of the new moon, either locally or at some internationally approved centre. And where Jews welcome the Sabbath as a day of rest, in memory of the completion of creation on the sixth day, Muslim men participate in a weekly congregational gathering for prayer (*jumu'ah*), at which a sermon (*khutbah*) is also given, shortly after midday on Friday, in remembrance of the creation of Adam on the sixth day. (It is also, according to Imam Muslim, quoting the words of the Prophet, the day when Adam entered paradise, and the day of Judgement will take place on a Friday.) Some Muslims take Friday to be a day of rest (or a half day of rest in some cases), but this is not universal and depends on the varying practice of different Islamic countries. What is held to be binding on all 'free, adult, male Muslims' is attendance at the weekly *jumu'ah* prayer.

There have in recent years been discussions and international conferences looking at standardising the Islamic calendar on the basis of astronomical calculations. There are communities that now do rely on such calculations, but these are still a small minority of the world's Muslim population.

**Sikhs** too are divided on the question of the dating of festivals, especially over their observance of the Bikrami (North Indian, Hindu, lunar/solar) calendar. The more recent Nanakshahi calendar, proposed in 2003, generally follows a Gregorian pattern where festivals occur on the same date each year (though with the exception of three important festive days when the two calendars coincide), but even today this reform is still subject to much debate and uncertainty. In the UK most of these festivals are celebrated on the following Sunday, whichever calendar is adopted by the local community, to enable worshippers to meet at their gurdwara – a practice sometimes followed in parts of India too.

The night, for Sikhs (in the Punjab at least) is divided into quarters ('*pahre*'), each consisting of three hours. In the Guru Granth Sahib there are two compositions, one by Guru Nanak and one by Guru Ram Das, on the theme of the four quarters of the



night. The period before dawn, regarded as the best for spiritual practices, is known in Punjabi as '*amrit vela*', the immortal time.

**Zoroastrian** days commence at sunrise, not midnight. The dating of their festivals has always been complex, with three different calendars operating for a long time side by side. In ancient times Iran followed a calendar of twelve months, each of 30 days, and they celebrated their New Year on the Spring equinox. The origins of the traditional Zoroastrian religious calendar lie though in the second century CE when, by imperial decree, Iran adopted a 365 day calendar instead of the previous 360 day version. (Even then, this new calendar did not account for the quarter day that relates to the modern Leap Year.) To ensure that NoRuz, the New Year festival, fell on the vernal equinox, an additional 30 day month used to be added to the calendar every 120 years by Zoroastrians in Iran. Even now the traditional Parsee Zoroastrian calendar (Shenshai) drifts one day back every four years (in Gregorian terms), since it does not account for the leap year.

The modern Iranian Zoroastrian calendar, which is widely used today, accounts for the leap year day and has fixed dates which remain constant. Out of loyalty to tradition, however, many Parsee Zoroastrians felt unwilling to adopt the new leap year calendar, because it reminded them that Iran was once a Zoroastrian nation. As a consequence the UK Zoroastrian community has ended up with the new year starting on two different days in relation to the Gregorian calendar, one on the vernal equinox around 21st March and the other in mid August, with the result that they joyfully celebrate two versions of each of their major festivals.

Many of these issues are discussed in earlier editorials of the Shap calendar and in articles in the Shap Journals, which can be accessed through the Shap website. In particular you will enjoy the article by Clive Lawton, '*Do you want the phone number?*' in the Shap Journal millennial edition on Time (published in 2000 CE – see copy on [www.shap.org/Journals](http://www.shap.org/Journals)).

To sum up, here fittingly, is a further creative comment from Clive's Editorial for the Shap Calendar - again penned in 1989: 'To adopt a truly multicultural perspective it is important to note that none of the festivals in this publication 'move about'. It is merely that the calendars in which they are fixed are not calculated in line with the Gregorian one. A community's calendar often enshrines some of the most important perceptions, and its rhythms and preoccupations are only strange or inconvenient if one puts the secular year at the centre of one's life.'

Peter Woodward  
Shap Calendar Editor



## SHAP CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

### 2012: Editorial Notes

In our April letter we promised you some dynamic changes to our Calendar materials for 2012 – 2013:

- no further email attachments to clog up your inbox
- access to data via a series of Websites, each accessed with an individual Key
- an optional printed version of the Wallchart covering eighteen months
- payment requested in advance for both eCalendar and Wallchart
- twelve festival photographs to follow via a separate website in November

This Editorial brings you the implementation of each of these changes: the bulky attachments we sent you last year are no more; instead this material has reached you via the second of three download websites (April, July, November). The optional Wallchart will be posted shortly to those of you who have ordered – and paid extra for – it. And the 12 of David Rose's photographs of people celebrating festivals will be sent to you via the third emailed key that will unlock website C on November 1<sup>st</sup>, along with the 12 monthly pictorial calendar style pages showing the dates of the various festivals. And all for £4!

### A few further changes

We have revised the presentation of the titles of the Chinese festivals we include, showing the English version in the PDFs for 2013 but including in the Calendar Booklet both this and the Pinyin system of transliteration adopted by the BBC, while retaining for the time being the Wade-Giles version we have used for many years.

We have added this year a number of Eastern Orthodox celebrations, showing the Julian calendar dates where these differ from the Gregorian versions (using [3] on the PDFs); and have used [RC] on the PDFs to indicate specifically Roman Catholic festivities.

We have revised the notes we offer at the head of the Calendar dates on page 7, and you will find the new version there with additions to Eastern Orthodox data and changes to a few other entries.

The invoice/order form contained on download website A showed prices for bulk purchase. Where the Calendar is used throughout the classrooms or wards of schools



and hospitals, we are no longer making this available for a single payment, but suggesting a charge of £2 for each classroom or ward.

The last few copies of the Shap Book '*Festivals in World Religions*' are still available at the reduced price of £10.00, plus £2.50 p&p (formerly £22.50). Copies can be ordered at [www.rmep.co.uk](http://www.rmep.co.uk) or by calling 01603 785 925. Please quote SWP11. Answers most of your questions!

We welcome comment on these or other issues, and will be especially interested to know how you respond to the system of download websites in place of the bulky attachments we sent you last year.

**Edited for the Shap Working Party by  
Peter Woodward**

**with contributions by**

**Roger Butler, Wendy Dossett, Mary Hayward, John Hinnells,  
Paul Hopkins, Clive Lawton, Eleanor Nesbitt and David Rose**



## SHAP CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

### 2013: EDITORIAL

Many are the customs that change not, but stay the same each calendar year:

- A. The Shap eCalendar will reach you by a golden key to a glorious download website at a cost of £4 (or €5 to Europeans).
- B. The Shap A2 Calendar Wallchart is distributed by post and costs £6 (or €7.50).
- C. Bulk purchase prices will be found on our website Calendar page ([www.shap.org/calendar](http://www.shap.org/calendar))
- D. Twelve colour photos by David Rose are included in the eCalendar price and will follow by emailed key on November 1st. "To travel hopefully" is their theme.

Equally many are those aspects of our products that have changed:

- E. Our Calendar dates and data now feature on the pages of RE:ONLINE, where they may be inspected but not copied or downloaded.
- F. We have adopted from RE:ONLINE (and enlarged) the practice they pioneered of directing readers to a relevant web site address for additional information about each festival.
- G. We have modified and improved the presentation of the Index to our eCalendar Booklet.
- H. After this year we will lose the services in our Calendar team of Eleanor Nesbitt of the University of Warwick, who has provided us with dates and information on Hindu, Jain and Sikh festivals for well over a decade now. Part of her role will be taken over by Dr J. Singh of the University of Leeds.
- I. We have been asked to give information about a significant Exhibition of Zoroastrian materials to be displayed at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London during September 2013.
- J. **We welcome feedback and particularly would like to know how useful (if at all) you find/would find the following:**
- K. The abbreviated version of festival descriptions we sent as a New Year Freebie last January.
- L. The Calendar style pages we send out each year to accompany our photographs.
- M. The extended text of the captions to David Rose's photos.
- N. The introduction of a theme to link the year's twelve photographs.
- O. The introduction this year of additional web site addresses for each festival described in the eCalendar Booklet.
- P. The possible introduction next year of a new Shap Festival Ap for mobiles and pads.



Happy Celebrating!

Peter Woodward

With: Roger Butler;  
John Hinnells;  
Eleanor Nesbitt;

Wendy Dossett;  
Paul Hopkins;  
David Rose.

Mary Hayward;  
Clive Lawton



## SHAP CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

### 2014: EDITORIAL

Change !

Change !

All Change!!!!

Well, not All. But this year's Editorial focuses on differences and innovations, although much (Price, Format, Method of Distribution, etc.) remains as before.

1. The team of stalwarts named below who collect, assess, rewrite and deliver the dates for festivals in their selected traditions remains much the same, but has been strengthened by direct access to scholars in a number of traditions, notably Buddhist, Jain and Sikh.
2. The inclusion of web site addresses offering information about and insights into each festival, which we adopted last year from the example of RE:Online (with whom we continue to share a happy partnership), has been developed further to offer up to five sites for each of the 185 festivals listed in our Calendars. Some of these sites are informative/ descriptive, some are official/semi official, some are sectarian, some are quirky, or just fun! The larger number of sites now listed allows for variety and choice.

Selecting the 900 plus web sites to include has been an intriguing and fascinating task, time demanding but rewarding and enriching. We hope you will find it an equally valuable experience to explore this treasure house and that doing so will benefit your own knowledge as well as enriching the studies you undertake and the courses you teach.

As an example, and for the most intriguing example of all, have a look at a U.S. based Jewish series of Orthodox approved websites at:

<http://www.torah tots.com/fungames.htm> .

3. Two members of our team have been involved through the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit in the preparation of the RE AUDIT, which is a separate, exciting and comprehensive survey of data and resources in the field of multi-faith RE. Mary Hayward has explored the field of books that are currently available to the RE teacher through library or bookshop. Paul Hopkins has done the same for the electronic resources scene. The outcome is a truly comprehensive and professional survey of what is available.



To access the AUDIT online go to:

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ces/research/wreru/research/completed/dcsf/audit-final.pdf>

But be warned – it can be a time consuming exercise

Happy studying, researching and celebrating!

**Peter Woodward**

With: **Roger Butler, Wendy Dossett, Mary Hayward, John Hinnells,  
Paul Hopkins, Clive Lawton, David Rose, Jasjit Singh.**



## SHAP CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

### 2015: EDITORIAL

Shap, like Janus, is looking backwards and forwards. So is the Shap Calendar.

Our first tentative dabbling at producing a calendar of festivals in World Religions took place in 1969, when a CEM Learning for Living article prompted the RS staff at Borough Road College to circulate a duplicated version, updated annually, along with bibliographies and lists of RE Resources – at 30 pence for the lot, postage included!

This coalesced into the Shap Calendar, produced by four successive Editors with their teams of helpers, and led to the writing of some 45 Calendar Editorials, all of which feature as part of the Shap archive in Oxford. A more detailed description of this process appears on the Shap website home page, ([www.shap.org](http://www.shap.org)) in an article by Mary Hayward – *A brief history of Shap* – and another by myself – *For a tour on the development of the calendar*.

The Calendar soon developed from the early duplicated version of the *Shap Mailing* into a printed format in CRC and CRE joint publications with Shap, and then as a separate Booklet to accompany the Shap Journal, *World Religions in Education*; then came an enlarged Wallchart and a smaller, plastic coated version; and the production of a Pictorial Calendar, presenting one of David Rose's stunning photographs for each month – 150 of them in all – though this year's edition repeats twelve of the best of the earlier years' photos. After that, with the closure of the Shap Office, came the move to an online version of the Calendar, presenting six monthly PDFs, which customers could view and download. In due course this was accompanied by the production and distribution by Paul Hopkins of a revamped and improved Wallchart.

More recently the Working Party has created harmonious links with RE:ONLINE, who also present OUR dates and text of the Calendar on THEIR website. Their innovation of accompanying the text with references to relevant download websites has become shared and enlarged to the point where we now show a key to five such sites for each festival, some 950 in total overall. These have been checked for availability this year, and some 50 or so have been deleted or replaced. We offer a free subscription to the eCalendar for the first five readers who can identify 15 of these new websites!

There is wonderful material for students of world faiths in these websites, both from within and about the festivals – for a test run take time to look at Jain Divali, or alternatively Paryushan Parva.



And we now have a new symbol, created specially for us, for one of the traditions whose dates we display on our PDFs and Wallchart. Our thanks to its author.

Happy studying...

**Peter Woodward**

With: **Roger Butler, Wendy Dossett, Mary Hayward, John Hinnells,  
Paul Hopkins, Clive Lawton, David Rose, Jasjit Singh.**



## SHAP CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

### 2016: EDITORIAL

Welcome to this year's Shap Calendar. Please read this Editorial carefully before trying to use the eCalendar material. Much remains the same as ever in this **47<sup>th</sup> edition** of the Calendar, but there are some important changes as set out below, and hints of more likely to come in a year's time.

- Change 1.* We now show **the day of the week** when each festival falls.
- Change 2.* We now use the **Name of the Festival** to show in **BOLD** if its date remains the same in each (Gregorian) year; In *ITALICS* if it changes by just one or two days from year to year; and in *ITALICS* but UNDERLINED if it varies considerably, as most Lunar dates do. This feature applies only to the eCalendar Booklet and not to the PDFs or the Wallchart.
- Change 3.* There are now **five download websites** for each Festival and in all cases but one (Christianity will follow next year) these follow a regular pattern:
- Description, often from within the appropriate tradition;
  - An alternative description, usually from a different type of source;
  - Educational material, for school, college or research;
  - Audio visual materials of an evocative nature;
  - Something creatively different.
- Change 4.* **The bottom row of the Wallchart** now lists twelve eminent individuals whose beliefs have shaped what they have become and what they have achieved. Their contribution to Science, Ethics, Humanism, Atheism, Agnosticism or Theistic belief is noteworthy. Notes on their lives and achievements, compiled by Professor Brian Gates, will feature at the start of each month in the Calendar Booklet, together with his selection of informative download websites.
- Here are twelve people who exhibit great diversity in what they believe; but it is the nature of these beliefs that has shaped their lives and their achievements; and it is what they have in common in their commitment to their beliefs that makes them of outstanding interest to us today.
- Change 5.* A copy of each of the **Calendar Editorials** from previous years – as far as we have them – is now posted in an article listed near the top of the Calendar page of the Website - go to :



[http://www.shapworkingparty.org.uk/downloads/calendar\\_editorials\\_1972-2015.pdf](http://www.shapworkingparty.org.uk/downloads/calendar_editorials_1972-2015.pdf) )

Look for intriguing comments from five different Editors.

*Change 6.* Until recently all **Baha'i festival dates** remained the same each year, although different time zones led to inconsistencies of celebration. The world wide Baha'i community has now introduced a new Badi' Calendar to help synchronise Baha'i celebrations throughout the world. Please study the new arrangements for their festival year, but expect some slight changes in the dates of certain of their festivals from year to year. For further detail **search the web** for 'Baha'i Dates 172 to 221 B.E.', which explains the situation clearly, and provides dates for many years to come. Note that the Birth dates for the Bab and for Baha'u'llah, which used to fall in consecutive months (October and November) now fall on consecutive days either in November (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2016) or October 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> in 2017 and back to November (9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> in 2018). Other dates vary according to whether Naw-Ruz falls on March 20 (in 2016 and 2017) or March 21 (in 2018). And note that all Baha'i festivals commence at sunset on the **evening before** the Gregorian dates we show.

Then there are some **Possible Changes** the Working Party is considering for future years:

*Possible Change 1.* Much of the information in our Calendar Booklet is of a descriptive nature. We are considering restricting the descriptive element so as to draw out the **symbolic and meaningful aspects** of each Festival.

*Possible Change 2.* We currently print **only** the Wallchart. We are considering printing certain other pages to ensure that users all receive some **element of description and also some indication of the inner meaning of the festivals** in what they receive, and not just the festival dates.

*Possible Change 3.* Shap is hard at work this year, and one aim in mind is to produce an **eBook** of help to all involved in the **RE Classroom**. Several articles in the **eBook** are likely to relate to Festivals and we are looking for materials from within faith communities and in Schools and Colleges that would be relevant to the current scene. For more information visit the **Shap website** ([www.shap.org](http://www.shap.org)).



*Possible Change 4.* A large number of our customers **fail to pay** for the Key to the eCalendar (£4) or the Wallchart (£6) we send them. These we eventually delete in large numbers from our Database each year. We are considering amending our system to ask for payment in advance **next year**, but in the meantime we now include a personalised Invoice with the eCalendar Key (instead of inside the eCalendar). This shows your Shap Number, your name, your postal address and your email address. Please pay promptly this year if you wish to receive **next year's** revised and exciting package.

N.B. If paying by BACS or Cheque, please include your **magic four figure Shap number**, which ensures we can trace the source of your payment. Each year we receive over 20 payments we cannot identify, many of them simply from a Local Authority or County Council without further designation. If paying by cheque, please post it to the Shap Address as shown on your recent Invoice: i.e. **Shap Working Party, c/o 200 School Lane, Aston. Market Drayton. TF9 4JD.** Tel. 07497 354154.

*Possible Change 5.* We apologise that a small number of errors crept into our system last June (partly due to health issues), mainly when copying dates from our Booklet into the three PDFs and thence into the Wallchart. We hope to avoid the need for circulating a further Corrigenda by more extensive/intensive proof reading this year. Offers of help with this process, principally in mid June next year, would be welcome.

We hope these changes, both current and projected, will not prove too confusing, and that the new formats will be helpful in your work. Please let us have your feedback on whether you find them helpful or perhaps over complex.

Peter **Woodward**: Shap Calendar Editor  
[calendar@shapworkingparty.org](mailto:calendar@shapworkingparty.org) or [shapcalendar@gmail.com](mailto:shapcalendar@gmail.com)



## EDITORIAL 2017 – 2018

First a word about personnel. For many years Shap's activities were led and inspired by a President, first Professor Ninian Smart, then Professor Geoffrey Parrinder, and now we have elected Clive Lawton OBE into that role. Part of his function is to be organising and directing the 50th Jubilee of the Working Party in the Spring of 2019. The Spring holiday weekend in April 1969 was in fact when the first Shap Conference was held at Shap Wells.

We have recently welcomed two new members into the Working Party and The Calendar Editorial group: Dr Jasjit Singh of the University of Leeds, and Malcolm Deboo, President of Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe. We also say a grateful farewell to Mary Hayward who is retiring from the Calendar Group and has contributed the dates for Christian festivals for the Calendars for many years - her input to the Calendar will be greatly missed.

You will find, if you have not already noticed it, that the distribution of the eCalendar and the Wallchart has a new procedure whereby these are not now sent automatically to previous purchasers. Instead you are being asked to send an email to [calendar@shapworkingparty.org.uk](mailto:calendar@shapworkingparty.org.uk), saying simply: **Please send eCalendar or Please send Wallchart or Please send Both.**

We hope that inviting people to place an order in this way will help to reduce the number of copies of our materials we distribute each year for which we receive no payment, and which we therefore presume will not be required.

In this connection please note that the correct address for payment by post is now:  
The Shap Working Party, 7 Garners Walk, Madeley. Crewe. CW3 9HG.

You will see that in the Calendar Booklet we have retained the innovation of showing the day/days of the week for each festival, and have temporarily continued indicating by giving the name of the festival in **BOLD**, *Italics* or Underlining whether the date of the festival is **the same each year**, *varies slightly*, or changes considerably.

We are also continuing each month to name and describe a prominent individual, some historical, some contemporary, whose life and beliefs have made a great impact upon the age when they lived. We introduce them with:

*Here is the first of twelve people, one for each month, who have been chosen because a) they exemplify how our deepest beliefs affect the pattern of our lives; and b) because of the variety and the strength of their beliefs. Each person chosen is markedly different in what they believe; but it is the very nature of these beliefs that has shaped their lives and*



*their achievements; and it is in large part the depth of their commitment to what they believe that makes them of interest to us today.*

The eCalendar Booklet is different – and longer - this year in that we have added to the descriptive text of some fifty of the 200 festivals we list first a reflective element, seeking to indicate in some way the meaning of the celebration to those who observe it, and then also a more detailed explanation of how the festival is observed. The five downloadable websites we mention after each description are the source of much of the additional material here. We would welcome feedback as to how helpful you find this additional material before we extend the practice further into next year's Booklet – and the following years.

In passing please note how helpful these carefully selected websites are for those looking for more detailed information on each festival, much of it from within the relevant communities - here is treasure indeed...

Happy hunting for festival material in 2018.

Edited for the Shap Working Party by

**Peter Woodward**

**With ... Paul Hopkins, Brian Gates, Clive Lawton, David Rose, Roger Butler, Wendy Dossett, Mary Hayward, Ann Krisman, John Hinnells, Jasjit Singh, Malcolm Deboo.**



## EDITORIAL 2018 – 2019

### Jubilee time!

In 2019 the Shap Working Party will celebrate its 50th Birthday with a joyful Jubilee / Conference/ get together at the Shap Wells Hotel, a significant venue in the Lake District where our Shappery first began in April, 1969.

### Time to quit ...

However, at its AGM in April 2018, after careful deliberation, the Working Party has accepted that its initial task of focusing attention and education on a plurality of faith/belief traditions (as opposed to a restricted diet of any single faith) **has been largely completed**. Accordingly, the Working Party has now made plans to 'self-destruct' after its Jubilee - although the twelve-strong Members of the Shap Calendar Group will continue to produce and distribute our current five different versions of festival dates and info for the following year.

### The nature of our search

To be more specific, what does '**largely completed**' mean in this context? What has been and what still is the role/purpose of the Working Party and what part has the Calendar played over these fifty years in pursuing and, to some extent, we hope, in bringing matters to a successful conclusion?

The deepest/major concerns of most religious and philosophical enquiry seem (to me) to revolve around the questions of a) **God/No God**; b) **Life here and hereafter**; c) **Suffering**; d) **Ethical concerns**; and e) **the role and identity of the Self**. Attempting to find sustainable answers to these issues **in a world religions context** has been the distinctive bread and butter of the Shap Working Party, as evidenced in the 650 plus articles in the back numbers of our Journal, (see our website), where, as in our Calendar, so many theistic and non-theistic elements feature. And our focus has been on exploring them not just in a formal, reflective manner but also amongst the colour and vivacity of daily life, worship and celebration.

### Key to objectivity

The key here for us has been the search for integrity in our approach to objectivity. It is so tempting to be caught up in the tradition where we grew up (or to which we now adhere) that we are always in some danger of losing our perspective. Perhaps we should all lay on one side for a month our own 'faith loyalty' and ask ourselves in private (or indeed publish if some so prefer) which **other** traditions seem to provide meaningful



answers to these Big Questions identified above. And only when those answers are clear to us should we return to pursue our study of our own home tradition, where our greater knowledge and experience are too valuable to ignore. Perhaps then we can openly and honestly determine where we each stand on these vitally important questions.

### **Aids to reflection**

As a major step in this direction the Shap Calendar Booklet now, in its 49th year, has recently grown in size through the addition of still further material of a *reflective* nature to many of its entries. This approach is one of two that have been further developed in the current edition: we now seek to combine a) *additional description* of practice derived from the five websites linked to each entry with b) *insightful reflection* on the nature of what is being celebrated. We offer our grateful thanks to those correspondents who have politely but thoughtfully requested more of each of these elements.

Several of our entries in the Booklet now fill an A4 page, and every festival has been accorded a whole page to itself in readiness for further treatment. This is in recognition of the fact that few of our customers will print out the whole Booklet in its entirety, but will search and study its riches on line and only print those elements they select for themselves and their students.

### **The Calendar will continue!**

Apart from that the different versions of the Shap Calendar reflect much the same diet as previously, although the days of the week for each festival are now shown in the eBooklet, the Calendar Pages and the Abbreviated version. From 2019 the leadership of the Calendar Group will be in the hands of four Members, **Paul, David, Roger and myself**, and we hope it will continue to function creatively for a further five years - if not for another fifty! Who knows, we might even return to printing some materials to post along with the colourful printed Wallchart!

Thanks go to each of the following for their input into what is genuinely a team effort: to **David** (Pictorial Calendar) and **Paul** (Wallchart and everything) especially, but also to **Anne, Brian, Clive, Jasjit, John, Malcolm, Roger and Wendy**. Sadly **Mary** has left us, but we welcome **Gill Rose** who, with her husband David, will help us oversee Christian materials in the future.

**Peter Woodward**

Editor