



Nekbakht Foundation

**Activity Report
2022**



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1. Introduction

The Nekbakht Foundation has shared in the relief that was felt all over the world following the abatement of the Covid-19 pandemic. Business travel by Board Members to the Biographical Department and its nearby buildings in Suresnes has been resumed, and has actually even intensified. The year 2022 has been full of activities preparing the organisation for a further expansion and development of its activities and responsibilities.

2. Composition of the Board.

A long-postponed (due to Covid-19) farewell party for our long-time Board chairman Wali van der Putt was organised in the summer. Shortly thereafter, in mid-August, the Board welcomed Ines van Dijk as a new member. She has extensive know-how in collection management and has already been very active in delineating modern ways to handle the Nekbakht archival collection. After the summer, our treasurer André Mas, who has been the driving force behind the restructuring and professionalization of the foundation, stepped down. His role was taken over by Pieter Jan Lont.

3. Strategic vision for the coming years

In the course of the reporting year, the Board devoted several brainstorm sessions to the future strategy of the Foundation. This has resulted in a Vision document that will be shared with other stakeholders in the field.

The document describes the attitude of the Board towards broadening the knowledge base of the Foundation. The basic idea is that in order to make the organisation less vulnerable, the Foundation needs more free lancers who can, collectively, ensure that continuity in the work of the Biographical Department and the Foundation as a whole is maintained, and create a broader knowledge base as well. The Board wants to make her archives digitally accessible and available for digital search and re-use through the internet.

To this end, the Board has defined new roles to be played by the free lancers:

- information specialist
- archivist
- subject specialist
- editor

For these newly organised activities the Nekbakht Foundation wants to deploy professionals such as documentalists or collection managers and ICT-specialists. Of course we will also continue to be supported by volunteers, who are indispensable in maintaining the overall scope of our activities.

4. Editorial Committee

The editorial committee has been productive, issuing a proposal for new publications including a priority listing. The Board has accepted most proposals and several projects have already started (see elsewhere in this report). The Committee also welcomed Saniya Ammerlaan as a new

member.

5. Complete Works, new volumes

The last two volumes of stenographed lectures, Complete Works 1926-III and 1926-IV, were published in the reporting year by Dutch Publishing house Panta Rhei. The printing run amounted to a modest 150 copies each, because the volumes are considered to be primarily of interest to a specialized audience. Omega bought about a quarter of the total and seems to have been successful in stirring up interest in the US. Both volumes will be added to the website in April 2023, where they can be downloaded for free.

6. Modernized editions of Complete Works 1922.

The Board has decided that a new version of the 1922 volumes of the Complete Works will be produced, by Alex Dijk and Anne-Louise Wirgman. It will incorporate their knowledge acquired as a result of working on the Complete Works up to 1926. The aim is to produce a volume that contains much less footnotes and is more easily accessible. This is a pilot project to be finalized in early 2023. If it turns out satisfactory, other volumes will follow. It is the Board's intention to make the new volumes accessible in hardcopy by Printing on Demand. They will also, in electronic form, replace the current pdf's on the website. The text is processed in a system called LaTeX. This enables visually satisfying page views and (finally) cross-referencing over the entire Complete Works.

7. New US edition of Hazrat Inayat Khan's biography

After a long delay, the US version of the Hazrat Inayat Khan Biography became available to American readers. Although it is still too early to pronounce it a success, it is a milestone in the cooperation between Suluk Press/Omega Publications and the Nekbakht Foundation. The publishers have made a concerted effort to create package deals, selling the older issues of the Complete Works at a 50% discount.

8. Facsimile editions

After publication of *Sufi (a quarterly magazine 1915-1920)* and *Sufism (a quarterly magazine 1921 – 1924)*, the facsimile editions of later magazines extending into the 1930 are almost ready to be printed. This will probably be done under the name of "Sufi Record". Again with a run of 150 copies. And again these too will be made available electronically on the Nekbakht website.

9. Early Works

After the completion of the books containing the stenographed lectures by Inayat Khan during the 1920s, the Foundation aims to create complementary volumes with Inayat Khan's activities between 1910 and 1920. These will be named the "Early Works". A rough layout and planning have been made, the work itself will commence in 2023.

10. Other publications

Efforts to get the English translation of "Die Mitte der Religionen" published in 2022 have not been crowned with success yet. Publication rights had to be cleared, contacts with the original author (Prof. Figl) re-established, and inadequacies in the initial translation addressed. Preparations have been made to set up a Printing On Demand (POD) account with Amazon.

Instrumental in all this is Editorial Board member Wali van der Zwan, who has agreed to share his extensive experience with POD in order to set up this account and pilot its use.

As a follow-up to this project, the Board also considers, following the advice of the Editorial Committee, to create new POD editions of older biographic books that are rare or have sold out long ago: biographies of Inayat Khan by Van Beek and Keesing, and Musharaff Khan's autobiographical "Pages in the Life of a Sufi".

11. Website and newsletter

After the summer, Saiqa Latif ended her involvement in the technical support of the Nekbakht Foundation Newsletter. She has been involved in it from the very beginning, and the Board is grateful for her exertions.

The newsletter still has a modest but enthusiastic and stable following of between 450 and 500 readers.

The website has been gradually expanding, displaying newly published books, such as the US biography of Inayat Khan and (shortly) the big volumes 1926 III and -IV. Also, digitized artefacts from the archives found their way into the website. Such as illuminated documents prepared for Inayat Khan's birthday celebrations, and a digitized wire recording of Pir Vilayat delivering an Oude Loo lecture. The current presentation of the site is however, not yet ideal. Some users find it difficult to navigate. This will be looked into by the time the Foundation finds new free-lancers. The site draws on average 20 visitors per day.

12. The archive

Thanks to the lifting of the Covid-19 lockdown, visitors have found their way to the archives again. For example, in April and May alone, 11 visitors came, and one researcher stayed for a week.

13. Actualized inventory and placement list

During the second half of the year, Ines van Dijk and Anne Louise (Qahira) Wirgman have created an actualized inventory of the archival collections of the Biographical Department, including a placement list. Most of the material, taking up the equivalent of 140 meters of shelf space, is in good condition. However, some custodial actions are recommended. Most importantly, much interesting material has surfaced that could well lead to new publications.

14. Exploitation of real estate in Suresnes

The building project involving the upper floors of the building housing the archives (Rue de Tuilerie nr 34) has taken up a goodish part of 2022. By end December the newly created apartment (one living room with kitchen, two sleeping rooms, two toilets, and two showering facilities) could be used by Board members. This apartment is going to serve as "Board House" in the coming years.

The project enables a more versatile use of the existing real estate of the Foundation and will assist us greatly in our plans to rent out a part of our real estate, thus generating much-needed income to further support our statutory goals. For this purpose the Board has started work with a real estate manager to investigate options for renting out our Rue de Tuilerie houses on Nr 40.

15. Sufi Suresnes (SuSu)

The Sufi Suresnes consortium started in 2020 as a collaborative effort of a number of organisations dealing with maintaining the legacy of Inayat Khan. The Nekbakht Foundation is one of the organisations participating on a voluntary basis. An important aim is refurbishing and revitalizing Suresnes-based Fazal Manzil. A fundraising action has been crowned with considerable success, yielding more than € 500.000,- from benefactors all over the world. As a result, a large renovation of the Khankah in the basement is currently under way.

Slightly ahead of this, the Museum, Library and Research Centre are already taking shape. The Foundation is part of the organisation committee that makes plans for reopening the Khankah, scheduled for September 2023. Also, we participate in a group that is working on the further realisation of the Research Center.

A highlight was the signing of a loan agreement that will enable SuSu to display a number of Nekbakht Foundation-owned objects in the museum in Fazal Manzil.

16. Cooperation with other institutions

The exchange of information, scanned letters or other documents, and translation and transcribing between the archives of the Sufi Museum, Den Haag and the Biographical Department continues. The Sufi Museum in The Hague has pioneered a plan to bring together representatives of all organisations housing archives and/or museal collections concerning Inayat Khan's legacy. The Nekbakht Foundation has promised its cooperation.

17. Changes in working arrangements for free lancers hired by the Foundation

Anne Louise (Qahira) Wirgman, who has been working a considerable portion of her time from her UK home base, will in the coming period be focusing her attention for the Foundation on the newly defined roles of editor and subject matter expert whereas the Foundation will start looking for new free lancers that collectively will maintain the continuity of the archives and Biographical Department. This will help broaden its knowledge base and enable regular opening hours for visitors. As editor she will continue work on the revision of the Complete Works and start editing the Early Works (see elsewhere in this report). As subject matter expert she will remain available, be it remotely, for researchers and interested third parties for any queries on Inayat Khan's life and work.

The Foundation is now in an exploratory phase for finding some free lancers who can deal with modern technological challenges involved in maintaining an archive, a website, a newsletter and broad cooperation with other organizations dealing with the conservation of Universal Sufism heirlooms, documents and history. A start has been made by enlisting the help of Wali van der Zwan as one of our new free-lance editors.

18. The invaluable workers for the cause.

Apart from Anne Louise (Qahira) Wirgman many workers, partly volunteers and partly paid via hourly rates, enable the Foundation to function. Here we should name in alphabetical order Den Anderson, Jean François Béry, Alex Kiss, Ian Kingston, Saiqa Latif, Hind Wakach, Joanna Watt, and Claire Wery.

19. Nekbakh's grave

Thanks to our Dutch friends of the Sufi museum and to Hakima Vis, the grave of Nekbakht at the Oud Eik en Duinen cemetery in The Hague is now maintained regularly, e.g. being adorned with lavender in the summer. It is now part of the itinerary when Sufi pilgrims visit the graves of the Companions and early workers.

20. Financial report

A detailed financial report will be issued separately. The investment portfolio of the Foundation has suffered from the losses in the financial markets triggered by the Russian invasion of the Ukraine.

However, the loss has been partly made good in the later part of the year. For now, it can be said that the Foundation continues to operate on a sound financial footing enabling it to continue financing promising developments in line with its articles of incorporation.

21. In conclusion

The year 2022 has been a very intense year, with the Foundation starting many new projects and preparing for a future-proof arrangement with dedicated and expert free lancers to make the organisation more resilient and effective. We are looking ahead confidently and enthusiastically, and we hope that our exertions will continue to bear fruit in 2023.

Special moments



At the long-postponed (due to the covid pandemic) farewell dinner for the longest-serving board member ever, Wali van der Putt, summer 2022. From left to right: Kadir Troelstra, Pieter Jan Lont, André Mas, Pim Claassen, Wali van der Putt and Martin van der Graaff.



Pim Claassen speaking on the occasion of the farewell dinner for our treasurer André Mas, autumn 2022.



The Board during a meeting in the Sufi Huis Haarlem (left), and at a brainstorm for a new vision document (right).