



Sands of Time

Newsletter of Tata Central Archives

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DOWN NEW ROADS, ARMED WITH NOTHING BUT HIS OWN VISION

Jamshedji Edalji Saklatvala first came in contact with Jamsetji Tata in 1899 and worked for him as an Estate Agent. Mr. Saklatvala was instrumental in buying land for Jamsetji in Dadar, Matunga, Wadala, Dharavi, Sewri and Sion in Bombay. Reproduced are excerpts from "Some Side-lights and Reminiscences of Late Mr. J. N. Tata (1899 to 1904)" by Jamsetji Edalji Saklatvala which we felt would be of interest to the readers.

"Jamsetji strove hard for the economic development of the country. He was inspired throughout his life by the loftiest national sentiment. He was gifted with a farseeing insight and a clear intellect. He had the rare gift of picking out the right man for the vast and cherished schemes. Of his Hydro-electric and Iron and Steel Works much has been said and known. I therefore confine myself with his pet



Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata.

schemes of Land and Estate Developments."

One morning, I was asked by Jamsetjee to go with him to his Sewri Quarries, a property that was bought by him about 12 years before I first met him. I joined him from Esplanade

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NAVSARI WEEK

Many Zoroastrians who left the shores of Iran after the Arab Invasion of Persia came from a small village called "Sari" in Iran. When they settled in the new land in India they called it "Nav" meaning new and "Sari", hence the name "Navsari". For several centuries Navsari remained the stronghold of numerous Zoroastrians and the headquarters of the priestly families of the Parsis in Western India.

On March 3, 1839 Jamsetji Tata was born in Navsari in a family of Parsi priests. We all know how great a visionary and industrialist Jamsetji was and are aware of his invaluable contribution to the industrialisation of India. But not many of us know about the man in his social and family environment.

Jamsetji or "Bapooji" - the "little father" - as he was affectionately called was the central figure of three generations, all of whom looked to him for assistance or advice. His father was a partner and a friend; his sons were to him the same. The whole family regarded him with veneration and with a great affection, though his habitual reserve caused them to keep their feelings in restraint. His family always bowed to his judgement, well knowing that he was ready to grant any reasonable request.

His homes were to him a source of great pleasure. He frequently visited his various estates at Matheran, Ootacamund, Panchgani, Bangalore and Navsari.

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THE BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDER



Prof Matthai Joseph who garlanded the bust of the Founder in TCA.

March 3, is an important day for the House of Tata. It is the birth anniversary of the Founder, Jamsetji Tata.

The observance of Founder's Day has evolved into an annual event in Tata Central Archives (TCA) when employees from different Tata Companies come together to pay homage to Jamsetji Tata. Colleagues from the Tata Management Training Centre, Tata Consultancy Services, Tata Quality Management Services, Taj Blue Diamond Hotel assembled in the foyer.

Prof. Mathai Joseph, Executive Director, Tata Research Development and Design Centre, Tata Consultancy Services, Pune

was the Chief Guest on the occasion and garlanded the bust of the Founder.

Members of the audience then went round the Exhibition on "Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata" which was especially set up to commemorate the occasion.



Tata employees who had gathered in the Foyer of TCA to pay homage to the Founder.

NAVSARI WEEK

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A view of Dasturwad in Navsari. On the extreme left is the house in which Jamsetji Tata was born.

Come December, it was Jamsetji's custom to invite his family and friends to the home of his birth - the Tata House at Dasturwad and another mansion on the outskirts of town near the park and hence called "Park House". On these occasions the old house in the town was set apart for his wife and her companions, while the men stayed at the house in the park, and drove down to Navsari in any kind of carriage for their means. Every morning the host was in his garden at six o'clock, planning new arrangements or changing old ones. At Christmas time "Navsari Week" began. Parsi families came down from Bombay, and fashionably dressed folk filled all the available houses. Jamsetji was the squire of the place. At this time the whole town of Navsari would come alive with garlands and buntings decorating the place. Parsis and non-Parsis from the

neighbouring villages and towns would participate in the activities. The school children of the Tata endowed schools would participate in plays, sports, picnics and cricket matches organised on different days of the week. The elders in the community too had similar activities chalked out for them. The days activities ended with the most welcome sound for all Parsis "Jamva Chaloji" - please come to eat - without which no Parsi gathering is complete.

At the end of the week was the prize distribution day, most of those who participated got some prize or token, thanks to Jamsetji's generosity. So ended the happy and tumultuous time for this otherwise sleepy little town of Navsari.

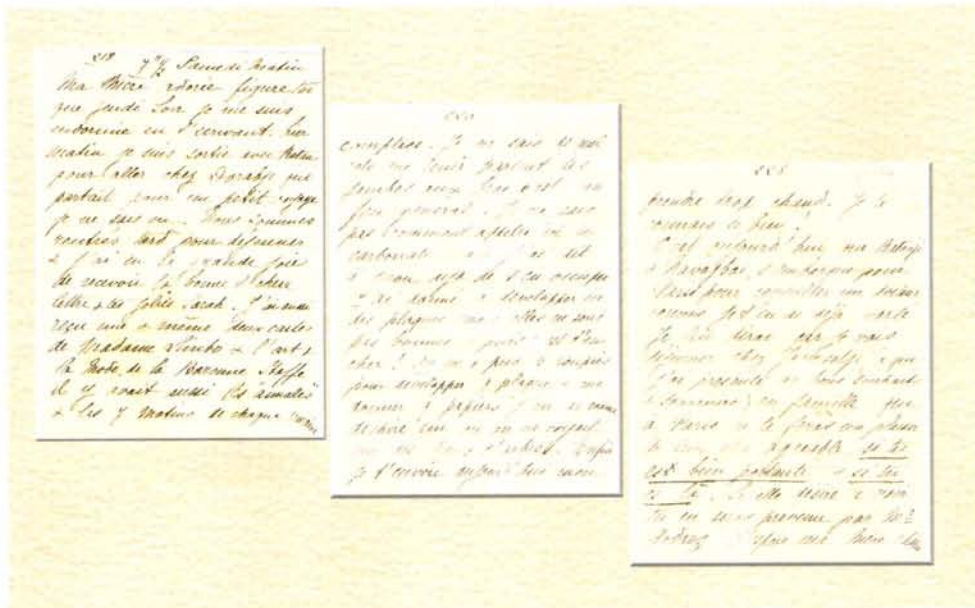
The tradition was carried on after Jamsetji's death by his cousin R. D. Tata. However, after him, the custom just faded away.

While in the process of researching the history of Tata Steel, Ms. Yasmin Panthaki, who is on an assignment by Tata Steel, came across this background material in the Tata Central Archives and wrote this article.

JOTTINGS OF SOONI TATA

The Tata Central Archives has over 70 letters of Sooni Tata to her mother Madame Briere giving a detailed account of her stay in India.

All these letters are in French. Given below is a brief synopsis of one of the letters dated January 20, 1903 which has been translated into English.



Sooni Tata

Yesterday I was present at an investiture (navjote) ceremony of a young girl. It was very simple and very interesting. The navjote is described in detail - the richly embroidered attire of the girl. The muslin sadra and the kusti and how the priest helps her to tie it.

The little girl received so many gifts that she could not keep her little fingers together.

In the afternoon of the same day, I went to a wedding and left only after 7 pm and since my ears were ringing with the loud Indian music of the flutes and tambourines I went to bed immediately after dinner.

Yesterday there was another fete - this time in our garden. A prize distribution to the little girls of Ratan's school. There were at least 200 of them and we served them food and drink. The prizes were in the form of books and scholarships not only for the cleverest but also for the needy. The only thing I did not take to was their uniform, not chic, specially the jacket which lowered the waist to somewhere near the stomach.

Their ages were from 3 to 15 or 16. For lunch they all sat on the ground and ate from banana leaves placed on a white cloth. Then some ladies and I with trays of brass in one hand began distributing the sweets, fruits and cakes.

After the children ate, it was the turn of the ladies and believe me the trays were emptied at an alarming rate. There we all listened to an Indian orchestra.



A sketch drawn by Sooni Tata in one of the letters to her mother, Madame Briere.



The navjote ceremony of Sylla and J. R. D. tata.

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House. He was driving a mail coach, the horse being a stout Australian Waler. Barely had we come to Sir J. J. Hospital he said that his hands were stiff and tired and then asked me to take the reins in my hand and drive. I told him that I had never driven a carriage and knew nothing about it. Still he persisted saying he would be sitting near me.

I took the reins in my hand and hardly had I managed to reach the Byculla Station a slightly wrong pull or swerve made me strike up to the Station Gate. "Hello, what have you done," said Jamsetjee, and took the reins again in his hand, and started driving. We came to the Quarries, and after a short stay we passed through Dharavi and crossed the Mahim Station level-crossing. Here we gave rest to our horse and then once more he put the reins in my hands and asked me to go on. This I did with a palpitating heart till we came up to Victoria Gardens where I asked him to let me get down in order that I might reach home situated close by.

One Sunday, I had accompanied him to his Bungalow in Mahad where we spent the whole day going about to his Yerangal Wadi in his country cart (Nagpuri Rangi to seat only one and driven by a pair of bullocks). In the evening, while returning at about 7.15 P.M. we crossed the Vesava Creek and while we were alighting from the country boat Jamsetjee tripped against the edge of the boat and fell out on the wet sand, stark flat. We picked him up and were glad to find that he was not hurt except that his white flannel coat got bespattered with black wet sand. From here we proceeded to his Khar Road Club where he had arranged a sumptuous dinner with his old friends who had just commenced their dinner, reserving a chair at the head for Jamsetjee. He expressed his regret for

being a bit late to his company - 15 in number. I was asked to join at the dinner and, to my surprise, Jamsetji pitchforked me in the chair reserved for him. In spite of resistance on my part, he pressed me on to it, and I had to obey.

One day, I was with him at his Juhu Cabin. It was a day when the tide was high but Jamsetjee after our noon-day meal had a short siesta, and after a couple of hours' rest ordered tea. This finished, he asked to take him through the southern narrow Creek leading to Danda fishing village, as always Jamsetjee wanted to find out new and different approaches to Juhu, there being, at that time, no pukka road built to come to Juhu. The high tide had receded, so we had to trudge on foot a short way, about 100 yards, and had to cross a 20' deep trench over a wooden plank where a turn-screw of a sluice gate was fixed. Jamsetjee, after deliberation and care, crossed over safely.

On his Mahad Estate he had, with the Collector's permission, got excavated a small dock to enable his boat to serve as an easy landing place. From this point he had built a pukka road to his bungalow on the top of the hill. Down the slope of this hill he had another small cottage seldom used by him. In Yerangal, abutting upon the west side of the Arabian Sea he had caused a small sea water pool to rear turtles which frequented the place in full moonlit nights to lay their eggs. It is instinctive of these turtles to return to the same spot where those eggs are laid after exactly 365 days and take away the hatched turtles which run away fast into the high tide water. Turtle catching is a very amusing sport on full moonlit nights. Jamsetjee once ordered out very large turtles from Karachi through his Agent. One was sent to his small lake in his Anik village; it was so big and heavy that one cart was required to carry it.

Jamsetjee had tried the rearing up of English Poultry but in this he was not successful as all the costly English fowls could not survive on his Navsari Estate



TEA - A CUP OF LIFE

Kanan Devan Tea is a household name in South India. For over a hundred years it has been brewing in the kettles of countless homes and hotels and for both the elite and the economically backward class, Kanan Devan Tea is a favourite beverage.

As early as 1790, the first European to set foot on the Kanan Devan Hills was the Duke of Wellington with a master plan to annihilate Tipu Sultan who was devastating the lines of Travancore. However his camp on these hills was short-lived as his plan had to be aborted due to the slip-off of Tipu from the mountains.

More than two decades later in 1817 Lt. Ward and Mr. Conner of the Madras Army seconded to the Great Trigonometrical Survey visited these mountains but could not make a detailed survey of the wild country which had no recorded visit from anyone else from the outside world until 1862.

In 1862, General Douglas Hamilton was sent to these hills by Sir Charles Trevelyan, Governor of Madras to find suitable convalescent homes for troops. Later, when in 1877 a commission of two representatives was appointed to determine the unsettled boundary between Travancore and the Madras Presidency, the Travancore Representative of the Commission, John Daniel Munro of Peermade, an officer of the Independent Kingdom of Travancore and designated superintendent of the Cardamom Hills, described the area, which was owned by the then Poonjar Chief, as "much of this is worthless land, but there is a good deal fit for cultivation".

The following year, Mr. H. G. Turner of the Madras Civil Service and his half brother Mr. A. W. Turner founded with Munro, who by then had obtained these Pooniat Concession lands, the North Travancore Land Planting and Agricultural Society. In the later years

small plantations started by other Europeans in the region were grouped under this Society. In 1888, the Kanan Devan Planters Association was started. Around this time the first tea was planted by Mr. Sharp on 50 acres of land at Parvathy.

In the 1990's, Finlay Muir and Company Limited's interests in tea was extended to the High Ranges with the visit of Sir John Muir and his son, Mr. P.R. Buchanan and Mr. W. Milne. May 5, 1897 South India saw the birth of the Kanan Devan Hills Produce Company in the Kanan Devan Concession Territory; growing cinchona, coffee, tea, sisal and rubber.

They owned twenty-six estates. An old time report says, "there were few factories with a little or no machinery, only two hand power rolling tables and the firing was all done in chulas and sifting by hand".

However, by 1915, sixteen fully equipped tea factories were functioning on the estates and two others were under construction. The largest of them had a capacity for making half-a-million kilos of tea annually and even the smallest could process about hundred thousand kilos. In the 1920's the Kanan Devan Hills Produce Company Limited became a solely tea producing company as the project of growing other hill crops was found to be not so promising as tea.

The rapid increase of produce from the district necessitated modern and quicker means of transportation. For this purpose, during the tenure of Mr. W. Mime as the General Manager of the Company, five hundred bullocks were imported and stalled at Kundaly. A veterinary surgeon with two assistants was brought from England to attend on these animals.

In 1902, the Kundaly Valley cart road was cut and a monorail was later installed along the route for the purpose

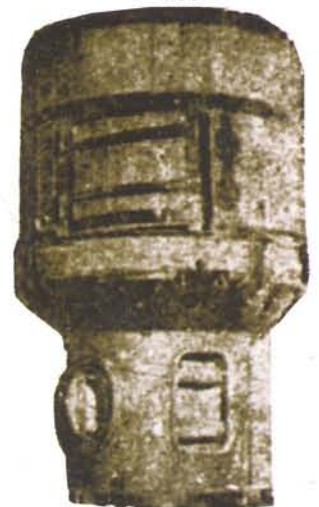


A plucker on a tea estate.

If you are cold,
tea will warm you.
If you are too heated,
it will cool you.
If you are depressed,
it will cheer you.
If you are excited,
it will calm you.

Gladstone, 1865

*One of the Original Tea Rollers
- 1905.*



TEA - A CUP OF LIFE



The first Albion Lorry - 1910.

"Tea tempers the spirits and harmonises the mind, dispels lassitude and relieves fatigue, awakens thought and prevents drowsiness, lightens or refreshes the body, and clears the perceptive faculties."

Confucius

of transporting tea and other produce from Munnar and Madupatty to Top Station. The goods carriage was a simple platform with a small wheel running on the rail and a larger one on the road which was pulled by the bullocks.

From Top Station, the tea was transported by aerial ropeway to Kottagudi which became popularly known as Bottom Station. The tea packed in imported "Imperial chests" from the U.K. was sent down to the low country from where it reached Tuticorin for shipment to the U.K.

In 1908, the monorail was replaced by a light railway. The railway enroute had other stations at Madupatty and Palar and the terminus at Top Station. The deluge in 1924 played havoc with the rails and left only relics which were beyond repairs. Hence, gradually the entire Kundaly Railway was dismantled which finally disappeared by World War II.

As an alternative to the ruined railways, a network of ropeways was constructed to ensure speedy transportation from 1924 onwards. The Kudaly Valley Ropeway was completed in 1926. Later the Company gradually opened a vast network of roads. Initially just bridle paths for conveyance were cut which later metamorphosed into cart roads and then to motorable roads.

In July 1932, the Kanan Devan Tea was trademarked and marketed thereafter. The Trademark consisted of the representation of two elephants facing each other with trunks uplifted above which appear the words "Kanan Devan Tea" printed on a curve in black or coloured lettering. Between the elephants and in the fore ground appears the representation of a woman clothed in black or colours bearing a basket on her back plucking tea. In the distance appear hill tops. This whole, within an oval, used to appear on coloured bags or packets or stencilled on tea chests in

which Kanan Devan Tea was marketed.

As in the High Range, in Anamallais also a rope way was in use from 1926 when a Company - Anamallais Ropeway Company - was incorporated for the purpose of connecting the district to the plains. With this ropeway and a fleet of lorries the Anamallais Ropeway Company took over transport between estates and the rail head at Pollachi on the plains. However its use for over 30 years was laid to rest in 1956.

When this was the scene in transportation expansion in the plantation district, elsewhere in the Madras Presidency, even around the time the Kanan Devan Hills Produce Company Limited was formed, a rice mill in Trichirappalli was acquired to cater to the staple food needs of its labour force in the High Range and Anamallais.

In the 1920s Mr. A. Blair Hill, to assist Mr. H. L. Pinches the General Manager in Munnar, in his scheme for disposing of some of our estates' dust teas in the local market, started "a modest piece of market research." This became even more firmly established with people in and around Trichy. One of the notable merchants were M/s. Khader Batcha and Sons who had built up their own tea business since 1922 and in 1929 they were instrumental in setting up the first Local Tea Sales Department (LTSD) in Trichirappalli. Business was at first conducted from the premises of the rice mill but later an office was built on the godown and the LTSD functioned there for a number of years.

In late thirties locally influential merchants like M/s K. P. Govinda Menon of Cochin. Mr. R. S. Navadgi of Bijapur and Messrs. P. G. Parameshwara Iyer & Sons of Calicut were brought into an agreement with the Company and were designated Principal Wholesale Dealers. Mr. M. A. Boas, the then Manager of L.T.S.D.

Leaf Transport by Bullock cart.



TEA - A CUP OF LIFE

eventually organised a strong team of wholesalers, all of secure financial standing and merchants of repute in their particular areas of business.

In the High Range, there was yet another revolution taking place; starting with the appointment of Dr. C. R. Harler as the Chief Scientific Officer to the Finlay Group of Tea Companies in South India.

In 1933, a laboratory and an office were located on Nullatanni Estate together with a tea tasting room. The first tasks before the new department were to educate planters towards the need for detailed soil studies, to understand the important role played by micro organisms in the formation of soil humus, the health and yielding capacities of the bushes and lastly, and of even great importance the need to arrest soil erosion where this was becoming evident.

A number of studies and experiments were carried out. The Department took up the matter of afforestation very seriously and a number of short articles were produced on the subject of plantation forestry which indirectly gave rise to the creation of the Company's forest service in the High Range in 1947. This forest service which concentrated on the utilisation of vacant land for the planting of fast growing Eucalyptus was seen by Sir Walter Champion, emeritus Professor of Forestry at Oxford in the fifties, "as the best of the kind in any tea district".

Dr. Harler, an exceptionally fine teacher, also took up the question of tea manufacture with his customary enthusiasm. By the close of the decade, manufacture on all estates had been revolutionised. Good tea-making and a thorough knowledge of it had become the order of the day.

When the British Raj came to an end, the Hills of Travancore had been

transformed into one of the world's most famous tea growing areas.

Until 1948, the Company had no office at Cochin. Tea grown in South India were generally sold either by private treaty or on the London and Colombo auctions. In 1947, a tea auction centre was inaugurated at Cochin and the first sale was held on July 5, 1947. The Calcutta Tea Purchase Department opened a sub-branch at Cochin on August 15, 1948 with the primary object of trading in Cochin auction brought tea and providing the parent company, the Finlay's worldwide network of tea importers and packers with a service at Cochin similar to the services offered by Finlays at other tea auction centres.

In 1963, the Finlay Group in association with Tata Sons Private Limited decided to form a new Company in India for the packaging and distribution of its tea. A close relationship between the Finlays and the House of Tatas had been established which was further cemented when Mr. J.R.D. Tata visited Glasgow on December 5, 1962.

The new Company in India, Tata-Finlay Limited, was formed in 1963, and in March 1964 a new factory was inaugurated for the Company's Packet Tea Unit in Bangalore. In 1976 Tata-Finlay Limited purchased the black tea producing/marketing operations and other interests.

The name of the Company was changed to Tata Tea Limited in 1983 when the James Finlay Group sold their remaining shareholdings, including the considerable hectorage and manufacturing facilities in India. Today, Tata Tea Limited is the largest Integrated Tea Company in the world, with activities spanning the entire spectrum of the industry.

Excerpts of the article reproduced from Tata Seithigal, Volume 2, No. 6, May-June 1996.



The Monorail - 1906.

Tea that helps our head and heart.

Tea medicates most every part. Tea rejuvenates the very old. Tea warms the hands of those who are cold.

Kundaly Valley Light Railway - 1911.



FOUNDER'S DAY CELEBRATIONS

D. M. Madan, Chief Accountant, Tata Iron and Steel Company, first conceived the idea of holding an annual gathering that should give each employee an opportunity of expressing his regard for the memory of the genius to whose faith and judgment, energy and perseverance, the works and towns of Jamshedpur and its environs bear enduring witness. At the same time, the ceremony was devised so as to enable each worker to demonstrate his pride of membership in the organisation.



The first Founders' Day Celebrations took place in Jamshedpur in 1932. To this day, as a tribute to the Founder, Jamsetji Tata, the employees of Tata Steel and other Group Companies celebrate Founder's Day on March 3 with much pomp and gaiety.

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Twasmorn the 3rd of March, I heard the
Church bells peal,
And buzzers sounding long drawn blasts,
a tremor I did feel.
But shone it passed and then a thought
that it was Founder's Day,
Soon flashed across my dormant mind, all
homage due to pay.

The sun shone bright on Tata's Works,
inside there was a bustle,
Departments quickly formed in groups
with eagerness and hustle,
As all in column were to move, with
reverence complete,
To lay their floral tributes at our
Benefactor's feet.

And now in close formation dressed with
colours gay and bright.
Came all our workmen clan by clan. It
was a splendid sight.
Each had a banner at their head, and on it
some device,

Depicting something of their thought, so
pleasing to the eyes.

And as they passed the Founder's bust,
they placed with solemn grace,
Their floral tributes on the grass, right at
the Statues base
While songs of praise were sung with
awe, they slowly moved away, For
other groups their turn await, their
homages to pay.

.....To noble Jamsetji Tata the homage
due today.
And at his feet in silent awe their
tribute there they laid,
And solemnly they moved away,
their pilgrimage was made.....

*Excerpts from the poem "A Review of the
Procession in the Works" reproduced from the
Tisco Review Vol. I No. 6, April 1933.*