



# Sands of Time

Newsletter of Tata Central Archives

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April 2004

## Homage To The Founder



Dr. B. Bowonder, Director, TMTC seen next to the bust of J. N. Tata after the garlanding ceremony.



Founder's Day, March 3, 2004 : The employees of Tata Management Training Centre and Tata Central Archives standing in silence in the foyer of the Tata Central Archives, to pay homage to the great world figure, Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata, on his birth anniversary.

## Knowledge Creation, Preservation, Access and Management

The Tata Central Archives (TCA) commenced digitising innumerable important documents belonging to the Group for both Preservation and Dissemination. As experienced by other archives, TCA also faced its fair share of software and hardware problems ranging from retrieval to storage.

In pursuit of its listening and learning processes TCA sent one of its representatives to attend the International Conference on Digital Libraries (ICDL) 2004 at New Delhi. The aim was to be in touch with emerging technologies and to find cures for existing problems.

The Energy Research Institute (TERI) in partnership with Department of Culture, Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Government of India organized the ICDC from February 24-27, 2004 in New Delhi. The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India, Commonwealth Educational Media Center for Asia

(CEMCA) and the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) were also associated with the conference.

The President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, inaugurated the Conference at Vigyan Bhavan. In his inaugural address he referred to the mission of creating a portal for digital libraries of India piloted by the Ministry of Information Technology (MIT) with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and the Carnegie Mellon University as partners for fostering creativity and free access to all human knowledge. This digital library, will initially create a free-to-read searchable collection of one million books by 2005 in India.

The Conference was designed to be a major forum for exchange of ideas between the developed and developing world. It was felt that through the deliberations of renowned national and

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We're on the Web!

<http://www.tatacentralarchives.com>



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## Knowledge Creation . . .



**Dr. Abdul Kalam, President of India, speaking on the occasion.**



*Inauguration of ICDL 2004. From left: Prof. Hsinchun Chen, Professor, Department of MIS, University of Arizona, USA; Dr R K Pachauri, Director-General, TERI; Prof. N Balakrishnan, Professor and Chair, Division of Information Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore; Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, President of India; Mr Jagmohan, Minister of Tourism and Culture, Government of India; and Mr Vinod Bhargava, Additional Director, Division of Information Technology and Services, TERI.*

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**"Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young."**

**Henry Ford**



**"Institutional Repositories" a seminar addressed by Mr. T. B. Rajasekhar, National Centre for Science Information (NCSI), Bangalore.**

international experts it would facilitate the development of roadmaps on digitisation of libraries, manuscripts and archives a hybrid of traditional and modern repositories.

One of the important Seminars was on "Institutional Repositories" addressed by Mr. T.B. Rajasekhar, National Centre for Science Information (NCSI), Bangalore. He repeatedly referred to the "Open Archives Initiative" and "Open Source Software" for building digital libraries. Mr. Ian H Witten, Department of Computer Science, University of Waikato, New Zealand, also presented a paper on "Building Digital Library using Open Source Software (GSDL)

These open source software's can be downloaded freely from the net to empower users, particularly in universities, libraries, and other public service institutions, to build their own digital libraries. Similarly, the numeric notation of Dewey Decimal Classification, with which many readers will have become familiar for arranging their records for easy retrieval.

Several speakers at the conference referred to the growth of the "Open Archives Initiative" and a standardised Ontology or Thesaurus for retrieval of documents on similar lines. Speaking to Mr. Jean-Marc Comment, the expert on Comintern Archives and Albania National Archives who helped in Digitising 1 million records (selected out of 10 million records) it was understood that no such

similar software in the field of Archives is readily available. The experts are of the firm opinion that as in the case of Libraries, Archives have yet to develop standardised software for arranging and retrieving their records. As of now everyone is using their own commercial software suiting their needs.

At the conference Ms. Heather Brown, Manager, Preservation, State Library of South Australia delivered a paper on "Preserving Cultural Heritage for Future Generations: A Hybrid Solution". She along with the panelists were of the firm opinion that Microfilm is the best medium for Preservation and Digitisation suited more to the needs of Dissemination. Latest technological developments in the field now make it possible for the same scanner to serve both the purposes of Microfilming and Digitisation. There are hybrid software's available in the markets which could transfer Digitised images to Microfilm and vice-versa. TCA is already in the processes procuring the addresses of companies dealing in this software.

Another issue touched upon in the conference was copyright. When it is not possible to identify the owner a line of caution is added requesting whosoever stakes a claim to the material to contact the issuing authorities with relevant proof of ownership.

The organisers of ICDL also presented two volumes of the Seminar Papers and Tutorials presented at the Conference and to the participants which proved to be very useful.



## Early Impressions

*As regards the life history of Mr. J. N. Tata much has already been written and he is rightly proclaimed as the greatest industrialist which our country has produced. We all know the projects which he has visualised and which since his death were given a practical shape. A truly pioneering spirit dominated his career and he would pursue his ideals after a careful study of all the details and thorough investigations. However, not much is known about the domestic side of his life and I, as one of the two nephews of Mr. J. N. Tata, give some of the reminiscences which I may happen to remember.*

Sir Sorab Saklatvala

I might say that my mother being the youngest of the four sisters of Mr. Tata, the latter took a special interest in her and her children. It will be interesting to note that Sir D. J. Tata, Mr. J. N. Tata's son, was born on 27th August 1858 whereas J. N. Tata's sister, Jerbai, my mother, was born 20th February 1859 and was thus younger than Sir Dorabji. My brothers and myself as youngsters came in personal touch with Jamsetji Tata, our uncle, and I can give a few of my early impressions. My younger brother Beram and myself invariably went into Mr. Tata's room every Sunday when we would be asked as to how we had fared at school. If the report was favourable we did not mind giving a few details but if it was otherwise we felt most uncomfortable! But there was some compensation for us boys as we had lunch with the family and it was only then that we enjoyed a plate of ice-cream, which in those days was a rare treat.

Mr. Tata would return home at 9-30 from his morning drive and after his bath he would talk to us in his room till lunch time.

Mr. Tata displayed the same versatility and keenness in everyday affairs of life that he did in bigger problems. When lunching he would tell Mrs. Tata as to how certain dishes might be cooked and the taste improved.

My only experience of travelling with him was when sometimes we went with him to Matheran during May holidays. He would tell us about the crops which were grown or could be grown in the surrounding country which could be seen from the train. I remember later on when I was studying for my B.A. examination at Panchgani, where my mother was

staying, Mr. Tata, on his way to Bangalore, had come up there. He went to Bhilad, a few miles away, where there was a small coffee plantation. He bought up acres and acres of land and appointed an agent to develop a coffee plantation. As we know, at Panchgani as well as Mahabaleshwar, strawberries are grown in abundance. He thought there was great scope of increasing the crop and I remember him saying that when he returned from his trip to England he would consider the question of taking up the Panchgani Plateau where a jam factory could be built and strawberries grown on the slopes of the Plateau.

As is known, he was fond of travelling and saw many countries and it was most interesting to hear him talk about the habits and customs of the different lands he had visited. At an early age he had visited China where his father had business connections. Mr. Tata also brought a few Chinamen who pulled rickshaws in the streets of Bombay, which sight in those early days attracted a great deal of attention. Similarly from England, on his return trip, he brought with him a hansom-cab and the sight of a coachman perched high and driving the cab was a novelty for Bombay. Mr. Tata was also the first to bring into Bombay four Hungarian horses, and generally used a pair of those horses with a rubber tyred 'buggy' during his morning drives...

Mr. Tata died at Bad Nauheim in Germany on 19th May 1904, where he had proceeded for treatment for heart trouble under the advice of and accompanied by his family doctor, Dr. Row. Mr. and Mrs. R. D. Tata and my brother Beram were present at the funeral of Mr. Tata in England.



Sir Sorab Saklatvala

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Sir Sorab  
Saklatvala



Jamsetji Tata (seated third from right) seen with a few Chinamen.



## A Man With Faith In His Vision

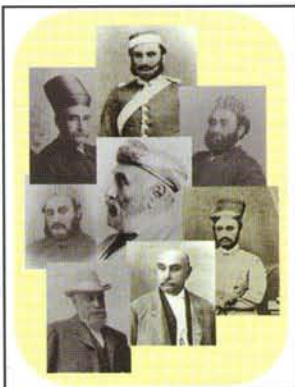
*Record of the talk given by Beram Saklatvala, Managing Director of Tata Limited, London at the Rotary Club of Jamshedpur on February 1, 1965.*



**Beram Saklatvala**

"There was hardly any man amongst its millions who may more fitly be said to have united within himself the qualities of which Indian people stand so greatly in need"

**Lovat Fraser**



**J. N. Tata in various stages of his life.**

..... He was born, as we know, in 1839. I wonder whether we have ever paused to consider the significance of that. Railways were barely in existence. The first railway in the world had been built some two years before his birth. If we remember that he was born only on the threshold of the 19th Century, before indeed that Century had taken its own shape born, as it were, in the shadow of the 18th Century. I think we must agree that his achievements are more remarkable and his foresight more miraculous.

### *Father and Son*

He was a very young man when he joined his father, Nusserwanjee Tata's firm in 1859, aged 20, and it is some measure of the confidence that his father placed in him that his first assignment was an overseas one. He was sent shortly after joining the firm to Hong Kong. And this young man was given the task of establishing new branches of the House in the Far East, which he did in Hong Kong and later, on the same tour, in Shanghai. He returned to Bombay, and, when he was still in his 20's, was one of the moving spirits in founding the Asiatic Banking Corporation-another activity which we now tend to forget.

### *Inveterate traveller*

He was an inveterate and continual traveller and, in 1864, he paid his first visit to England. It so happened that by the time he arrived, he arrived to face massive difficulties. The Banking Corporation, which he had been a moving spirit in founding and whose securities and papers he carried with him, had run into difficulties while he was on the long sea voyage and liquidation was inevitable. It is a tribute to his integrity and his skill, and to the force of his personality which impressed that integrity and that skill upon people in

England, that he was himself allowed, as a young man, to clear up these difficulties, which he did with immense success. Most of the time, some four years, which he spent in England, he stayed in Lancashire, the traditional centre of the textile trade, arranging for cotton shipments; and with his searching and inquisitive mind, not content merely with making shipments, but making a close study of the textile industry.

### *First business venture*

On his return to India, while still in his thirties, he bought a derelict oil mill and converted it to a cotton mill. This was one of his first ventures into industry as such. It was a successful venture and without benefit of capital gains tax and without benefit of other penalties, he was able to sell it, some two years later and so increased the capital at his disposal. He re-visited England, made a further study of the cotton industry and, because of his roving and inquisitive mind, did not return on this second occasion directly but went by way of Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Turkey and Russia. He wanted to see all that he could see and to learn all that he could learn. Fortunately for posterity, he kept a journal of his travels, a journal from which extracts have been published and which, one day I hope, may be published in full. It shows not only a curious mind but a witty one – an astringent, an acid and a slightly cynical mind.

This was by no means the limit of his travelling. He visited America more than once (as those in Jamshedpur well know because at least one of those visits was specifically connected with the steel industry). He visited Australia, he visited Canada: and we must remember that, in his days, there were no airlines. There was no simple way of having lunch in London and tea in New York or breakfast

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## A Man With Faith In His Vision

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in Bombay and dinner in London. Each journey was an adventure and a long one, and in some cases perhaps a hardship.

During all this time, he saw industry as the servant and supporter of the nation. As I see it, re-reading his life for this talk, he devoted his time to bringing India into the 20th Century even before the 20th Century had been born.

### India's first luxury hotel

In 1883, he foresaw that in the new India, Bombay would become an important international centre of trade and commerce and would attract businessmen as well as tourists. So he built the Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay, using land and estates that he could certainly have put to more profitable use. But he felt it his duty to provide Bombay with a modern hotel in order that she should have a place in which to receive the visitors and industrialists who, with his vision and forethought, he knew would come. It is typical of the man that later, in 1902, he travelled to Berlin and to Paris to buy his equipment-unfortunately Tata Limited was not founded until five years later: we could have saved the old gentleman some of the trouble ! But travel, he did, to ensure that the best and the most modern gear in the way of lifts, electrical equipment, furnishing and decor went into the Taj. He wrote from Europe a very attractive letter to his son, Dorabji – attractive to us as later readers, may be less attractive to Dorabji. He warned Dorabji not to introduce into the Taj some of the modern ideas on decor that he had picked up at Cambridge with their reds and their yellows! Jamsetji was essentially a practical man and no 'aesthete' – a word which he uses with some distaste in the letter.

### The Tata Line

Another dream that he had – this one not, unfortunately, to be fulfilled – was the foundation of a shipping line for India. He was sure that at some time India would become a great maritime nation. So again he travelled. He went to Tokyo; he

discussed shipping problems with Japanese Shipping Lines; he went to Canada; he went again to England; and in England he chartered the small vessel the "Annie Barrow". (Prices are interesting he was able to charter her for £ 1,050 a month – you try that today!) Later he was to charter two more vessels. He saw this venture and wrote of it as the "Tata Line". He designed the inhouse flag (blue, the House colour) with the family motto "Humata, Hukhata, Huvarashta".

Then came a freight war. The P. & O. did not like the idea of an independent Tata Line plying between Japan, China and India. Freights were reduced. As the P. & O. reduced their freights, so the Tata Line reduced theirs, until competition reached the point where the P. & O. was actually carrying goods for nothing. This was competition which was hard to meet and unfortunately, the Tata Shipping Line did not come to anything. But this does not reduce the value of the vision nor the validity of the plan. When we remember that today India has indeed a large and growing merchant navy, we know that Jamsetji was on the right track. It is interesting to remember that it was left to his successor, Mr. J. R. D. Tata, half a century later, to found a successful Tata Line, which at that time, of course, had to be an airline.

### Mangoes to England

His mind ranged into numerous possibilities. He tried exporting mangoes to England in the 19th Century. He had the idea that the empty cold storage vessels coming out of Australia could be used for this trade. He made arrangements with Covent Garden and – he never did things on a small scale – he shipped 500 tons. It didn't work but, again, this does not reduce the value of this roving, enquiring, experimenting mind. We today limp after him. Even with airlines, and the possibility of having mangoes in London within 24 hours, I don't suppose that, in three years, the trade will reach the volume of 500 tons,



A survey party.

"It is by solid work such as your father did that India will be brought up to a higher standard of comfort and civilization... I therefore look upon your father and the group of men who are following in his footsteps, not merely from the commercial standpoint, but as political pioneers of the most reliable character."

Lord George Hamilton  
to Sir Dorab Tata



A view of the Taj Mahal Hotel,  
Bombay.

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## A Man With Faith In His Vision

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which old Jamsetji tried on the first shipment.

### *Fishing, cold storage and wells*

He experimented with fishing in Bombay and bought a trawler. He had an idea of making one of the creeks into a reservoir where the prawns breed. This too didn't fructify, but it did later. We now have, as some of you know, a fishing company with American associates, which is indeed deep-freezing and exporting some of Bombay's fish.

Jamsetji had ideas about cold storage too. He envisaged and planned in Bombay a large ice making cold storage building in which food would be stored. And, (waste not, want not) he envisaged that the manufacturing of the ice would create a coolness in the rooms surrounding the plant, and he planned to let these out as offices – air-conditioning long, long before it came into being!

He studied wells and the digging of wells in Australia, in England and in France. He imported machinery from England. He had wells dug and the machinery for a considerable time after his death was still in Navsari and available for people to use.

### *Peaches and silk*

He experimented with gardening. He imported peach trees from California, other fruit trees, nut trees. He set up experimental places in Bangalore and elsewhere. He even – God bless him – tried to grow the vine in India and carried out certain experiments in Poona. I hope that one day one of his successors will raise the torch aloft where Jamsetji dropped it, and that one day we shall sit down and shall I say, taste of the fruits thereof and recognise the validity of that dream too. More successfully – and this may not be known to all of you – He started a silk farm in Mysore, putting it in charge of two Japanese – one of whom incidentally was the servant of our present Chairman's father. He imported machinery from Japan and carried out scientific researches and experiments,

both into the mulberry tree – the pasture – and the silk worm itself.

### *The three major issues*

But along with all these minor matters, fascinating and interesting as they are, he kept his eye firmly on three major issues. It was clear to him that for India to achieve economic independence and there is no other independence that is valid – she required three things; power for her industry, trained scientists for her development, and iron and steel which is the basis of all industry.

### *Power, monuments to his vision*

As a mill owner in Bombay, he realised the importance of power and he had the vision – at that time it must have seemed rather unreal to many – of harnessing Bombay's 90 days of rainfall to give power for the 365 days of the year. This project, I think even Jamshedpur must recognise, ranks in importance with the Steel Project. The Tata Power Companies are again his memorial and the great artificial lakes outside Bombay are monuments to his vision and judgement. Today, the hydro-electric power is supplemented by the great and growing Tata Thermal Station at Trombay.

### *Something for the scientist*

To provide the scientists, Jamsetji founded the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore which, in fact, came into being after his death. Again with his passion for seeing things at first hand, for travelling and for learning, he visited England, Germany, France, Belgium and Switzerland; talked with educationalists, looked at Universities, collected ideas. He then gave a princely endowment to the Institute which he first conceived as a central university for India, dealing with matters scientific, which should foster colleges elsewhere in India, each designed to meet the needs of local industry, agriculture, horticulture, and mining. In England, he commissioned Professor William Ramsay to come out to India to make a study and to write a report.

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**A view of the Tata Steel Works at Jamshedpur.**

"It symbolises the confidence of Indians in themselves, their willingness to be associated with a project somewhat unfamiliar in this country, and their assurance of their political stability which alone can guarantee the continued advancement of India"

Lord Sydenham while laying the foundation stone of the Lonavala dam



**A view of the Bhira Generating Station.**



## A Man With Faith In His Vision

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Ramsay did this, and he rejected the idea that the Institute should be called a University since it was to concentrate on the sciences and would not, therefore, be a place of universal learning and would not be a University in the strict sense as Ramsay understood it. Jamsetji never let this idea sleep.

On visits to Germany when he went to Dusseldorf, when he saw what science and research and technology could do for a country, his mind went back continually to the idea and to the importance of this Institute.

Like the Steel Company, it came into being after his death. But now his dream has come true. It has now the status of a University and it has provided India with a centre of learning and of research in matters of science and has provided India's most learned men.

### Iron and steel

So much for power, so much for the scientists. With his work for the Iron and Steel Industry, everyone here is familiar and it would be impertinent for me to discuss that at all.

### The tomb

Jamsetji died in Germany and his tomb is in London which was the nearest place where there was a Parsi burial ground. And we sometimes feel in Tata Limited that although we are among the smallest of the Tata Group, we have a great honour and responsibility. We try to discharge this responsibility by seeing to it that flowers and wreaths are laid there on every Founder's Day.

### The seed corn

The times that Jamsetji lived in were different from our own. We must remember that every venture he started and that was successful, was used, in its turn, to generate other ventures. From the textile mills, came the resources which ultimately flowed into and made possible the power schemes and the

steel schemes. There is one quick way of bringing a farm to an end, and that is to rob the farmer of his seed corn. Out of each harvest, a farmer must put by a percentage of his corn to plant again in the next season. And if he has to expand and to plant new fields, then he must retain more and more of his crop to have more and more seed corn. Profit is the seed corn of industry. As the corn grows and the seed increases, so profits flow out of industry. They are not a weed, to be scythed by the scythe of taxation or to be eradicated by the hoe of nationalization. To change the metaphor, they are the measurement of an industry's efficiency and they are the new power generated by that industry for the creation of further industries and further installations and equipment for the country. I sometimes speculate how far Jamsetji, with all his greatness, with all his vision, with all his power, could have done, had he not been allowed to retain his seed corn and plant it in new fields.

### When a man comes to be judged

In such a limited time it is impossible to give more than this very brief sketch of some of Jamsetji Tata's wide range of dreams and achievements. He is not merely one of India's greatest sons but he is a great world figure. He is indeed a world figure, and I think it is true to say that this is because, when a man comes to be judged by the public opinion of his own country or by the public opinion of the world at large, he is judged not by the wealth he possesses, nor by the powers he has obtained and wields; he is judged by the services he has rendered to humanity. Jamsetji's services were not merely the physical installations which he built or founded or envisaged, but the proof he gave that all things were possible in India and the example he furnished that the human mind, at its best, recognises no limits and that frontiers of knowledge and frontiers of experience are never final but exist only to be challenged and crossed.



**The Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.**

**"Jamsetji had heightened commerce, industry and everything to the dignity of culture and awakened the cultivated mind of India"**

**Justice V. N. Chandavarkar at the condolence meeting of J. N. Tata on March 28, 1905**



**J. N. Tata's Mausoleum at Bookwood Cemetery.**



General Louis Lyautey asked his gardener to plant a particular type of tree on his estate. The gardener objected that the tree, being unusually slow to grow, would take nearly a century to reach maturity. "In that case," the marshal replied, "there is no time to lose. Plant it this afternoon!"

For any further information, please contact :

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We're on the Web!

<http://www.tatacentralarchives.com>

"If you cannot make it greater at least preserve it. Do not let things slide. Go on doing my work and increasing it, but if you cannot, do not lose what we have already done."

Jamsetji Tata to his family members on his death-bed

## Waste Not This Precious Resource

In a material sense we depend heavily on trees for paper and building products, and countless jobs revolve around earth's largest plants. The main purpose of this article is to heighten awareness of the importance of trees, and to remind us not to waste this precious resource, and to replant young trees where we harvest old ones so that we do not repeat the mistakes that lead to desertification.

Way back in April 1901, Jamsetji Tata in a letter to H. A. Crump, Secretary (Revenue Department), Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces had this to say: "I have the honour to apply for Prospecting Licenses for exploring, trial mining and smelting iron ores and other cognate

metals at Lohara and Peepalgaon in the Chanda district... I take it that Government will let me have the best coal available on payment, but would also like to be assured that Government will provide through their Forest Department on payment all the firewood I may require for converting it into charcoal, the forest Department undertaking to plant afresh all such trees as may be cut down for the purpose. Or, if Government desire it, I am willing to undertake the cutting down and replanting of trees on government allotting to me certain areas of forests."

A reminder to us all of the essential part trees play in our lives and in the life of the planet at this juncture.

## A Family Portrait



A family portrait Jamsetji Tata and wife Hirabai with their younger son Ratan seated in the front row. Elder son Dorab is seen with his wife Meherbai on his right and Navajbai (Ratan's wife) on his left.