

The life and History of the Late Lieutenant Colonel James Tod

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James Tod was born in the town named Islington in London on 20 March 1782 in a high standing family. His father* came to India for the agriculture of indigo at the high province of Mirzapur. James Tod also came with him. Tod joined the British East India Company and initially spent some time studying at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich* in 1798. Then, at the age of seventeen, he joined second number European regiment¹, when Lord Wellesley was thinking to march the army against Malka* Island.¹ He applied for joining the army, the application was accepted, and he was appointed to the army. But due to some political reason the army did not reach Malka Island. Then, he was appointed as a lieutenant on 29th May, 1800. In 1805, he was able to arrange his posting as a member of the escort to a family friend who had been appointed as Envoy and resident to a Sindian royal court.²

Malka : Malka is a Jordian town located in the North of Irbid on the border of Syria.(opposite to golden heights)

Tod Senior : Tod senior had not been in the Company but had instead owned an indigo plantation at Mirzapur.

Woolwich : Woolwich, in south-east London, was a British Army military academy for the training of commissioned officers of the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers. It later also trained officers of the Royal Corps of Signals and other technical corps. RMA Woolwich was commonly known as "The Shop" because its first building was a converted workshop of the Woolwich Arsenal.

As time passes, due to his excellent service, he was appointed in Kolkata from Haridwar and Delhi too by the government of the company.

¹ Garg.Damodarlal(ed);travels in western India, [JamesTod], Granthvikas, Jaipur, 2014, P 1.

² Forbes, Rosita, India of the Princes, The University of Michigan, Book club,1939 p.11

James Tod was a skilled engineer, so after appointed in Delhi, the responsibility for examining old canals was given to him. When he knew about his appointment, he got permission to go with some document to study the rule of different kings. Graeme Mercer* was also familiar with the skill and performance of Tod so he was appointed as the office of the army and he was joined in the above-said campaign.³

Graeme Mercer entered Bengal service as Assistant Surgeon. He stayed at East India company Resident at Scindiah's court. He worked as a secretary to the Harquis of Wanesley in India and accompanied Lord Lake as a Diplomatic agent.

* Graeme Mercer (Born 04/07/1764 died 06/10/1841)

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* Daita town is situated in the middle region of Madhya Pradesh and it has been formed by the august ruler king Vir Sinhu Dev. The state was administered as part of the Bundelkhand Agency of Central India. It lay in the extreme north-west of Bundelkhand, near Gwalior, and was surrounded by other princely states of Central India, except on the east where it bordered upon the United Provinces. The famous location of it is at the North side of the famous pilgrim center of Pitambari Devi.

Generally, at that time European bureaucrats did not have more topographical knowledge about Rajputana and nearby territories e.g Graeme Mercer had to go Gwalior but he reached Udaypur via Agra to the south direction. Tod who is being skilled engineer due to travel from Agra he portrayed distance from one place to another place and its topographical features. He did mensuration based on Agra, Daitiya* and Jansi and reached Udaypur in June 1806. In the travel of Agra to Udaypur, James Tod thought that why could not he prepare a map of the remaining Rajputana and their other territories? Keeping in mind such thinking he travelled with the diplomat to study more territories. As time passes, Tod got topographical knowledge of most of the territories of middle India. Due to having the hobby of pilgrimage, he got an opportunity for studying located and broken monuments by direct or indirect medium and started to write territorial history. For writing, he had to study historical letters, documents etc.⁴

³ Keen, Caroline, Princely India and the British, Political Development and the Operation of Empire, Bloomsbury Academic, 2012, p 12.

⁴ Paliwal, Devilal, Tod krit Rajput Jatiyon ka Itihas, Rajisthani Granthagar, Jodhpur, 2018. P.2

Tod as an engineer having an interest of studying and doing research about the history of territories made him famous as the best writer (with reference to a study of Rajasthan history). As time passes, he gained each quality of becoming the best researcher where he was able to coordinate information effectively. He published *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'han* and *Travels western India*.⁵

James Tod with his conservant Graeme Mercer reached 'Kamlasa' which is situated on the boundary of Malawa of Bundelkhand from the path of Udaypur to Chitodgarh. His study was continued in the pilgrimage. In 1807, the army of Sindhiya controlled and encamped at the fort named Rahatgarh. While controlling the fort Tod got the opportunity to travel nearby areas. He collected documents and information from people.⁶ At the end of a continuous journey of study of ten years, he prepared the Anthropological Survey of India, which was useful to the government of the company in the war of Maratha and Angla-Maratha.⁶

By 1813, he had achieved promotion to the rank of captain and had been appointed as Envoy and Resident to a Sindian royal court. As time passes, there were alliance between the government of the company and indigenous kingdoms. At that time James Tod was appointed as political agent in the rule of Udaypur, Jodhpur, kota, Bundi and Jesalmer. He made the headquarter in Udaipur. At that time, Maharana Bhimasinh was the ruler of Mevad. As an assistant political agent, he tried out to improve the system of rule and financial condition of Mevad. Tod has taken the rule of Mevad under his control and he appointed Raja Zoramal as a treasurer to control the amiss financial charges decided to give a pension of 1000 to Raja saheb. Due to such efforts, Mevad's financial condition had been improved. Here, the remarkable matter is that, as the financial condition improved, the rule was given to Raja Saheb.⁷

At the time of staying at this place, Tod liked to do compilation and writing of the archaeological material of Mevad. In this work, the support had been provided by Maharaj Saheb. Besides that Maharaja Saheb had also provided the facility of ancient scriptures, Ramayan, Mahabharat, Pruthviraj Raso and many more from his library.⁸

⁵ Gupta, Krishna Swaroop, Gopal,; Rajasthan ke Itihas ke strot,; Publication Scheme, Jaipur, 1988, P, 114

⁶ Gupta, R., Bakshi, S.R. ; Studies in Indian History; Rajasthan Through The Ages The Heritage of Rajputs, New Delhi, sarup & sons; March, 2014, P. 19

⁷ Norbert, Peabody, Tod's Rajast'han and The Boundaries of imperial Rule in Nineteenth Century India, Modern Asian Studies. 30(1). P. 185

⁸ David, Arnold, Deaths capes; India in an age of Romanticism and *empire*; 1800-1856, 2012, P. 12.

Generally, Colonel Tod was an officer, unlike Forbes who was very much anxious about the local language and culture and also obtained a vision of administration. He knew that to study the history of local civilization, he required to have a person who is educated, knew and understood territorial language, culture and able to translate the language of whichever territory. As Forbes had the support of Dalpatram, the same way Yatignanchandra was very helpful to Colonel Tod in studying documents that were written by Indian Scholars. During the pilgrimage, Yatignanchandra easily read epigraphs, coins and Sanskrit –precipices treatise.⁹

Tod passed most of the time around Rajputana, so he could easily use territorial language. At whichever territory he stayed, he asked local people to sing, and write folk songs. Besides he tried to know the customs, rituals, ceremony and history of Rajputana anxiously. A highly inspirational quality about Tod was that whichever native country he went to, he read historical books and asked to copy them. Further, he studied old temples, monuments of brave soldiers, war places etc., taintless. During the study, if he found an epigraph very important, then he took it away with him for study.¹⁰ Due to continuous travelling and the effort he made to learn various epigraphs, old coins and writing that telling the history of Rajputana.

Tod had travelled to many places of Rajputana to collect historical facts. In 1819 he travelled Udaipur to Nathdwara, Kummlagarh, Dhanerav and Nadol to Jodhpur. He used various paths to return. E.g. he went to Udaipur from Mandor, Medta, Pushkar and Ajmer, then he went to Bundi and Kota. After observing Baudoli, Bhanpur, Dhamnar, Zalra, patan, Bilauliya, Mainal and Bengu, he again returned to Udaipur. Due to the travelling of said places, Tod had coordinated material to erect a reliable treatise. Due to continuous travelling, Tod's health deteriorated, no option was left except back to his country¹¹

Reginald Heber, the Bishop of Calcutta, (1*) commented that

“His misfortune was that, in consequence of favouring native princes so much, the government of Calcutta were led to suspect him of corruption, and consequently to narrow his powers and

⁹ Jason, Freitag, The power which raised them from ruin and oppression; James Tod, Historiography, and The Rajput ideal, New York; Columbia University Libraries, 2011. P.7

¹⁰ Serving empire, serving Nation; James Tod and the Rajput's of Rajasthan. Leiden; Brill. 2011. P 59

¹¹ Garg. Damodar Lal (ed); travels in western India, [James Tod], Granthvikas, Jaipur, 2014, PXii.

associate other officers with him in his trust, till he was disgusted and resigned his place. They are now satisfied, I believe, that their suspicions were groundless.”

(1*)Reginald Heber (21 April 1783 – 3 April 1826) was an English bishop, a man of letters and hymn-writer. After 16 years as a country parson, he served as Bishop of Calcutta until his death at the age of 42. The son of a rich landowner and cleric, Heber gained fame at the University of Oxford as a poet. After graduation, he made an extended tour of Scandinavia, Russia and Central Europe.

Tod's immediate superior, David Ochterlony,(2*) agreed with the above statements so Tod gave resignation to the Government of the company. At the end of 1st June 1822, he returned to his native country with all coordinated historical material. This travel was started from Mumbai Port, but this very anxious and energetic historian also coordinated historical material from his last travel between Udaipur to Mumbai. Periodically, this last coordination had been proved very important contribution to work published as *Travels in Western India*.¹²

After staying for 22 days in Mumbai, James Tod returned to England but here it is notable to mention that he had to pay 33 pounds more at the Mumbai port due to having the quantity of his collected historical material from India. During the last years of his life, Tod talked about India at functions in Paris and elsewhere across Europe. He also became a member of the newly established Royal Asiatic Society in London founded by Henry Thomas Colebrook in 1823. Then after he worked as a librarian.¹³ He published *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'han Vol. I* in 1829 based on collected material during his stay in India. He published *Travels in Western India* based on his last journey Udaipur to Bombay posthumously in 1839 after four years of his death.¹⁴ The devoted historian and empathetic to the people of India had been passed away on 17th November 1835 at the age of fifty-three.¹⁵

(2*) Major-general Sir David Ochterlony, 1st Baronet of Pitforth, 1st Baronet of Ochterlony GCB (12 February 1758 – 15 July 1825) was a Massachusetts-born general of the East India Company in British India. He held the powerful post of British Resident to the Mughal court at Delhi.

¹² Shah. P.G. Journal of Gujarat Research Society, Vol. XXIII, Oct 1961.4/92.

¹³ Tod, James, *Travels in Western India*, University of Michigan, D S 412 T63 London P. Xlviii

¹⁴ Tod James.....P XiiX

¹⁵ Tod, James P.62

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