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## PREFACE

The present volume contains the proceedings of the Beawar Session of the Rajasthan History Congress held on January 16 and 17, 1973. The papers have been arranged in a chronological order.

We are grateful to the Government of Rajasthan for the grant of Rs. 2,000/- towards the publication of the proceedings. But for this timely grant, it would have been too difficult for us to get this volume published timely looking to our financial stringency.

Thanks are due to Dr. P. R. Shah, Honorary, Treasurer, Rajasthan History Congress and Shri Prakash Vyas, Research Scholar, who helped me immensely in getting the proceedings published. Shri Govind Narain my old student, who took all pains to get the volume printed expeditiously in his press, the Rajshri Printers, deserves our thanks.

Despite all care taken, mistakes might have crept in. I hope the readers will overlook them.

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February 5, 1974.

# **Presidential Address**

By

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To be called upon to preside over an annual session of the Rajasthan History Congress is a rare distinction which its Executive Committee has been pleased to confer upon me, presumably in recognition of the fact that I have been a student of Rajput history for more than four decades. As early as 1917 Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, the most far-sighted educationist of modern India, made provision for special study of Rajput history in the post-graduate classes of Calcutta University. On his invitation a well-known scholar from Rajasthan, Pandit Ram Karan, joined the teaching staff of the University and subsequently wrote his **History of the Rathors** which was published in the University's **Journal of the Department of Letters**. In 1930-32 I studied Rajput history at the feet of the late. Dr. Hem Chandra Ray, author of the monumental work **Dynastic History of Northern India**, and Professor Subimal Chandra Dutt whose deep scholarship unfortunately lay buried in oral teaching. Although my attention was diverted to other fields of Indian history when I took to teaching and research, Rajput history remained a source of perennial interest for me, and from time to time I made humble contributions to its political aspect. I value the present occasion as an opportunity for exchange of views with other scholars - more competent and more enterprising than myself - who are explorers in this virgin field. For this contact with kindred minds I am deeply grateful to the Executive Committee. I hope my inadequacy and lapses will not make them regret their choice.

My personal interest in the historical role of the Rajputs is only a dim reflection of the affectionate admiration which the people of Bengal have felt for them for more than a century, ever since Tod's **Annals** carried the tales of Rajput chivalry to the towns and villages of that distant province. For the Bengalis Rajasthan remains the land **par excellence** of heroes and patriots whose exploits constitute one of the main themes of Bengali literature. In a poetical work entitled **Padmini Upakhyana** (Episode of Padmini, published in 1858) the author, Rangalal Banerjee, narrated the stirring events connected with that legendary heroine's self-sacrifice. While paying his tribute to the Rajput heroes he echoed the new-born patriotic fervour of the Bengali middle class in couplets which are among the treasures of Bengali literature :

Who wants to live when freedom is gone ?

Who wants to put the shackles of slavery around his own ankles ?

Ramesh Chandra Dutt, one of the earliest Indian members of the Indian Civil Service, well-known for his works on ancient Indian history and economic history of India, was also a leading novelist of his time. One of his historical novels, entitled **Rajput Jivan Sandhya (Evening of Rajput Life)**, published in 1879, portrayed the gradual sunset over Mewar from the battle of Haldighat to Jahangir's treaty of 1615. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the greatest of Bengali novelists and composer of the national song **Bande Mataram**, published in 1882 the best of his historical novels, **Raja Sinha**, dealing with the exploits of the last great hero of Mewar. Rajput heroes and Rajput traditions of valour figured prominently in some other works of these two great writers. One of the earliest Bengali dramas, **Krishnakumari Natak**, dealing with the tragic episode of Krishnakumari, was written by Michael Madhusudan Datta, the greatest Bengali poet of the nineteenth century. Among the greatest of the Bengali dramatists was Dwijendra Lal Roy who wrote several dramas on Rajput historical characters, including **Pratap Sinha, Mewar Patan (Fall of Mewar)** and **Durgadas**, published between the years 1905 and 1908 when national enthusiasm evoked by the Swadeshi Movement was at its height. In my younger days these dramas were very popular on the stage, not only in the city of Calcutta but also in remote villages where amateurs interested in the dramatic art brought the valour and tragedy of Rajasthan to admiring audiences. Tod's great work was widely read in its Bengali version. Some portions of the **Annals**, collected and edited under the title **Tales of Rajput Chivalry**, were published by Calcutta University and prescribed as a compulsory text-book for Matriculation candidates in the thirties of the present century.

Apart from these silken ties of sentiment and emotion there were practical links between Bengal and Rajasthan even in the eighteenth century. The great banking house of Jagat Seth played a very important role in the economic life of Bengal for more than four decades, from 1718 to 1760, and its association with politics was a decisive factor in the revolutions of 1740 and 1757, i.e., the accession of Alivardi Khan and the fall of Siraj-ud-daulah respectively. Its founder, Hiranand Saha, came from Marwar to Patna which was then included in the Bengal subah. His son Manik Chand

established his business head-quarters at Murshidabad which was then the capital of the Bengal subah. The Mughal Emperor conferred upon him the title of 'Jagat Seth'. During the same period a Bengali named Vidyadhar Bhattacharya was, in Tod's words, 'one of the most eminent coadjutors of the prince (Sawai Jai Singh) in all his scientific pursuits, both astronomical and historical'. To him was assigned the merit of the design and execution' of 'the new city of Jaipur; In his old age he served the Jaipur State as an elder statesman. When the city of Jaipur became a prey to wild dismay as a result of Iswari Singh's tragic suicide on 13 December 1750, Vidyadhar along with another old minister Hargovind pacified the people and conciliated the Marathas.

This Congress is dedicated to the study of the history of 'Rajasthan'. This term is of comparatively recent origin although ancient records such as Asoka's Minor Rock Edict at Bairat indicate the importance of this region even in the remote past. Dr. G. N. Sharma has drawn our attention to the use of the term in an inscription of 1708. The fact that Tod used it in the title of his great work seems to indicate that it had gained wide currency in his days. While noting that in the 'familiar dialect' the region was called 'Rajwarra' he preferred 'Rajasthan' which he described as "the collective and classical denomination" of that portion of India which was 'the abode of (Rajpoot) princes' or 'regal dwelling'. India was a land of princes and 'regal dwellings' were scattered all over the country; but this region was regarded as 'the abode of princes' in a special sense. It is not possible to determine why Tod treated 'Rajasthan' as a 'classical denomination', for it does not occur in classical literature or old epigraphs. So far as the British Government was concerned the 'common designation' of the Rajput principalities was (as Tod himself noted) 'Rajputana'. Free India preferred 'Rajasthan' to 'Rajputana', thus giving Tod's choice a permanent place in the political geography of the Indian Union.

In the days of the Great Mughals the Rajput principalities owing allegiance to the Padshah were included from the point of view of revenue administration as also for political purposes in the Subah of Ajmer. A dual system prevailed in respect of Sirohi, Jalor, Dungarpur and Banswara; although included within the Subah of Ajmer for revenue purposes, these territories were attached for political purposes to the Subah of Ahmedabad. The imperial subahdar realised a fixed round sum from each Rajput prince within his

jurisdiction, closely watched his political activities, and stationed **fauj-dars** and **qiladars** in important forts like Ranthambhor, without, however, interfering with internal administration. Each State was a separate unit, known by its historic name; there was no 'collective denomination' for the entire region. Despite submission to imperial suzerainty each Rajput principality retained its distinct individuality in name as also in organization; unity imposed from outside was superficial and was not expressed through a common geographical name.

During the early Muslim period there was stronger emphasis on such individuality because there was no common political superior. From time to time there were pockets of Muslim rule such as Ajmer, Nagaur, Jalor and Chitor; but the Sultanate of Delhi never made serious efforts to anticipate the imperial role which was later to be played by the Timurids. Nor did any of the Rajput princes succeed in imposing his suzerainty over a considerable part of the region. It is instructive to recall Babur's comment on one of Rana Sangram Singh's basic difficulties at Khanua: "...the rajas and rais of high degree, who obeyed him in this battle, and the governors and commanders who were amongst his followers in this conflict, had not obeyed him in any earlier fight, or, out of regard to their own dignity, been friendly with him." The political and military exploits of the earlier Rajput dynasties, such as the Gurjara-Pratiharas, the Chahamanas, the Chaulukyas, the Paramaras and the Kalachuris, did not stimulate the political aspirations of the later Rajput princes whose ambition did not extend to empire-building even in a miniature form. It was only in the age of decadence that Sawai Jai Singh 'intended to get up the ceremony of the **aswamedha yuga**, or sacrifice of the horse.'

The absence of a 'collective denomination' for the Rajput principalities was a reflection of lack of political unity among them which was a cardinal feature of their history. The Marathas eliminated the field of active political authority and converted their political organization into a confederacy of semi-independent chieftains; but the office of the Peshwa provided a central authority which symbolised their political aspirations and to which at least lip homage was paid by the rulers of the constituent units. The autonomous Sikh **Misls** evolved a common forum for deliberation in an assembly called the **Sarbat Khalsa**. Never in the long history of the Rajputs did they succeed in evolving any central authority like the



Peshwa or even a deliberative gathering like the **Sarbat Khalsa**. Submission to a common superior was a political virtue repugnant to Rajput sentiment and tradition; it could be enforced only by superior military and political power encroaching from outside, as in the case of the Mughals and the British; but it could not grow from within as a natural product of Rajput genius.

This is a peculiar political phenomenon which requires very careful study. Tod's explanation is connected with his concept of 'feudalism'. He says, "...the component parts of a great feudal federation...must contain too many discordant particles - too many rivalries and national antipathies," very difficult to amalgamate. There were some elements in Rajput social, political and military organization to which the term 'feudal' might be loosely applied; but Tod's assessment of their nature and impact on historical development cannot be accepted without serious modifications. For instance, the crown is usually weak in a 'feudal' state, but in Tod's view monarchy was the key-stone of the Rajput political arch; "on the personal character of the chief of a feudal government everything depends." He quoted the example of Raj Singh who, "infusing by his talent and energy patriotic sentiments into all his subordinates, vanquished in a series of conflicts the vast military resources of the empire, led by the emperor, his sons, and chosen generals." This is, of course, an exaggerated estimate of Raj Singh's achievement in his struggle against Aurangzib; but in pursuing Tod's own thesis we may ask: If the 'feudal' monarchy of Mewar could 'vanquish...the vast military resources' of the Mughal Padshah, why did it fail to play a unifying role in Rajasthan?

Writing about a quarter of a century ago I observed: "The clan system stood in the way of the political unification of Rajputana." Rana Sangram Singh's failure to unite the different Rajput clans against Babur - their unwillingness to obey him 'out of regard to their own dignity'—warrants the hypothesis that he was trying to impose on them a new type of political-cum-military collaboration which could not be fitted into their traditional pattern of socio-political organization. The clan feuds which constitute one of the distinctive features of Rajput history reflected a weakness inherent in that organization; these were not provoked by Mughal policy, and these survived the fall of the Timurids, as the battle of Gangwana shows. Sir J.N. Sarkar points out that the jealous rivalry of the Rathors and the Kachhwas was 'the dominating factor of Rajput society even under British rule.'

The petition submitted by 'the expatriated Chiefs of Marwar' to the British Political Agent in the Western Rajput States in August 1821 illustrates the working of the clan system in its nineteenth-century form. The chiefs stated : "Sri Maharaja and ourselves are of one stock, all Rathors. He is our head, we his servants : but now anger has seized him, and we are dispossessed of our country... When our services are acceptable, then is he our lord; when not, we are again his brothers and kindred, claimants and laying claim to the land." The same principle was emphasized in the 'remonstrance of the sub-vassals of Deogarh' against their chief : "When Deogarh was established at the same time were our allotments : as is his patrimony, so is our patrimony."

The idea that the lands in a State constitute something like the collective and exclusive patrimony of the ruling clan explains the term 'Kala Patta' applied to grants of land made by rulers to persons 'who were foreign in country and blood', i.e. members of other clans coming from other States. To this category belonged some of the 'sixteen chief nobles of Mewar.' A well known instance is the grant of 'the fief (patta) of Rampura' by Rana Sangram Singh II to his nephew Madho Singh, the Kachhwa prince of Jaipur. This method of curtailing the heritage of the ruling clan was naturally resented; it was an innovation resorted to by the ruling princes to strengthen their own hands against the local nobility. As 'Kala patta' was 'virtually a grant resumable' the position of those who held it was naturally less secure than that of the nobles of the indigenous clan; they were specially dependent upon royal favour. The ruling prince could place more reliance on outsiders having no root in the soil than on those whose rights were rooted in the clan system.

This inroad into the clan system appears to have been made possible by the establishment of Mughal suzerainty over the Rajput princes. Referring to Udai Singh of Marwar Tod says : With the aid of his imperial brother-in-law, he greatly diminished the power of the feudal aristocracy, and clipped the wings of almost all the greater vassals, while he made numerous sequestrations of the lands of the ancient allodality and lesser vassals." In general, the imperial protection secured by the Rajput princes at the cost of independence strengthened their internal position vis a vis their 'feudal' nobles and made it possible for them to curtail the latter's privileges and sequester their estates with less fear of resistance

than in former times. The implications of this increase in princely authority were far-reaching. Transfer of land disturbed the social equilibrium and created social tension. Land was sacred, for its possession indicated the owner's place in his clan and determined his economic competence. Tradition, sentiment and economic interest combined to vest land with unusual importance in a community whose martial traditions were repugnant to trade and commerce, and in a region where cultivable land was not plentiful. The importation of grantees who were 'foreign in country and blood' was a revolutionary process in so far as it involved erosion of the clan system and alteration of the political balance within the State.

'Feudalism' and the clan system were interconnected, one penetrating into the other, and producing a socio-political hierarchy which was generally parochial in outlook. The lessons of the Mughal system were not taken to heart. The Timurids brought the Rajputs into contact with the vast, varied world from the snow-clad mountains of Central Asia to the swamps of Bengal and the jungles of Assam, from the wild hills on the north-west frontier to the rolling black-soil plain of the Deccan. A big and complicated administrative and military organization was exposed to their view. But the Rajput mind - gripped by the tradition of isolation, weakened by petty strife and inflated by family pride - reacted unfavourably to this impressive demonstration of unity on a vast scale. Instead of thinking in terms of big political projects and utilising the unprecedented opportunities offered by the dissolution of the Mughal Empire the Rajput princes played the old game with a new zest, fighting for patrimony and encroaching upon neighbours' territories. Sawai Jai Singh's dream of *asvamedha* meant in practical terms nothing more than casting his net over Bundi and the Shekhawat domains. No wonder the Rajputs succumbed first to the cruel depredations of the Marathas and then to the merciful suzerainty of the British.

These ideas which I have ventured to place before this distinguished audience must be treated as tentative; firm conclusions are not possible at this stage because adequate data have not yet been collected and scrutinised in the light of scientific techniques of historical investigation. The exact nature and working of 'feudalism' - its effect on chronic political disunity - can be ascertained only on the basis of records relating to grants of land, revenue system, judicial administration and military organization. Tod's 'Sketch of Feudal

System in Rajasthan' would be a very unsatisfactory guide for serious students of the subject. Basing his ideas on Hallam he sought to discover elements of the European type of 'feudalism' in the Rajput States. But 'feudalism' implies infinite varieties : to search for uniformity is an unprofitable academic adventure. The concept is "so large and vague that it is quite possible to maintain that of all countries England was the most, or for the matter of that the least, feudalized; that William the Conqueror introduced, or for the matter of that suppressed, the feudal system". These words were used by the great English constitutional historian, F. W. Maitland. Classification of 'feudal' States is not really possible. A State possessing the characteristics usually associated with 'feudalism' may be, says Maitland, "a powerful compact centralized kingdom; it may be hardly more than a loose confederation of principalities". In normal times no Rajput State belonged to either of these two extreme categories. There was no approximation to 'compact centralized monarchical administration because the powers of the crown were circumscribed by 'feudal' privileges; the estates of the big nobles were not so autonomous as to be termed 'principalities' or units of a 'loose federation'. Maitland describes, 'feudalism' as "a state of society in which all or a great part of public rights and duties are inextricably interwoven with the tenure of land, in which the whole government system - financial, military, judicial - is part of the law of private property". Then he adds a note of warning : "I do not mean that feudalism so complete as this is ever found " Even with our imperfect knowledge of conditions prevailing in Rajasthan we may be quite certain that 'feudalism so complete' did not exist there.

Tod's account of 'feudalism' relates to the conditions prevailing towards the close of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. How far his observations should be regarded as applicable to the pre-Mughal period, or even to the seventeenth century, cannot be determined by a priori arguments. He was not unaware of the processes of change which were at work in Rajasthan. "Maratha cunning", he wrote, "engrafted on Mohamedan intolerance, had greatly obscured these institutions." This view is partial and incomplete, for it takes note only of external forces and ignores internal factors which must have contributed to socio-political transformation. It would be absurd to presume that Rajput society, left to itself, was completely static and moved only when external compulsion came into play. Then again, a distinction must be made between the two external forces mentioned by him, viz.

Mughal supremacy and Maratha invasions. The former initiated vital changes such as increase in royal authority and alteration in the balance of power due to the eclipse of Mewar and prominence of Amber and Marwar, but the latter represented an undiluted process of destruction. By maintaining internal peace and controlling succession the Great Mughals ensured political stability and facilitated the functioning of indigenous institutions in the Rajput States. The Marathas, on the other hand, rudely disturbed political stability by provoking wars of succession and threw the indigenous institutions out of gear by their ravages and demands for tribute. Tod's unqualified condemnation of the 'predatory' incursions of the Marathas was a faithful echo of Rajasthan's agony.

Tod noted one special feature of Rajput 'feudalism' which distinguished it sharply from its European counterpart. "The form", he wrote, "is truly patriarchal in these States, where the greater portion of the vassal chiefs, from the highest of the sixteen peers to the holders of a *charsa* of land, claim affinity in blood to the sovereign." No such 'affinity' was claimed by the landholders of medieval Europe. Tod did not realise that there was an inner inconsistency between 'feudalism' of the European type and the 'patriarchal' pattern of political organization prevailing in Rajasthan. In Europe military tenure, which may roughly be regarded as the essence of 'feudalism,' did not originate in 'affinity in blood to the sovereign.' Tod believed that the 'patriarchal form' - was 'the best suited to the genius of the people'; its "durability... war, famine and anarchy have failed to destroy." In his view the 'ruling principle' of the Rajput State was the 'paternity of the sovereign'. This was not the 'ruling principle' of the 'feudal' State in medieval Europe.

Writing more than two decades ago I expressed the hope that some student to whom Rajput records might be available would take up the study of Rajput political, administrative and social systems. The term 'records' must be understood in the widest sense : it includes official papers, family papers, bardic chronicles, collections of bardic songs, inscriptions, coins, Persian historical chronicles, etc. The written 'records' should be supplemented by local legends, oral testimony, study of architectural monuments such as forts and temples built by 'feudal' chiefs, on - the - spot examination of medieval weapons, etc. The survey should cover the period from the eighth century (when Rajput principalities such as the Gurjara - Pratihara kingdom and the kingdom of Mewar began to grow) to the

eighteenth century. This is a Herculean task beyond the capacity of a single scholar; but it might be taken up on a co-operative basis and sponsored by the Universities of Rajasthan. Exploration in the field of political history would lose much of its interest and importance if the framework within which political and military incidents took place remain hidden from the historian's view.

The problem of the origin of the Rajputs which has been the subject of a long historical debate appears to be of crucial importance in connection with the origin of 'feudalism' as also of the clan system. If the Rajputs - or at least some sections of the Rajputs - were really immigrants from countries outside India, it may be presumed that some of the ideas and institutions which they brought with them influenced pre-existing ideas and institutions in the regions where they formed their new settlements. Tod hinted at this possibility when he wrote: "The Rajput tribes could scarcely have acquired some of their still existing Scythic habits and warlike superstitions on the burning plains of Ind". No modern historian can, of course, accept in toto the 'analogies' drawn by him 'between the Scythians, the Rajputs, and tribes of Scandinavia'; but the underlying idea - the possibility of immigration of ideas and institutions along with immigration of races - cannot be lightly dismissed.

Scholarly discussions extending over several decades have not given us indisputable conclusions so far as the problem of the origin of the Rajputs is concerned. We can hardly complain of paucity of sources; a vast mass of materials consisting of inscriptions, coins, literary works in Sanskrit and Hindi and unwritten traditions handed down from generation to generation is available for critical study. It is not very likely that new evidence of a really crucial type will be discovered in future and we shall find ourselves on firmer ground. New epigraphic records might be brought to notice, but we can hardly expect objective historical narratives like the Allahabad *Prasasti* of Harishena; inscriptions of the early medieval period usually conform to a conventional pattern of which vague generalisation and dynastic glorification constitute distinctive features.

A new method of study might be tried: I mean the method adopted by Maitland in his *Domesday Book And Beyond* and also in his *Constitutional History of England*. Taking his stand on the laws and institutions of England at a particular date he looked back and

examined how these had developed during the preceding period. For example, the records of the Domesday Survey provided clues to the understanding of Anglo-Saxon England. We are not fortunate enough to possess such elaborate and precise records; but on the basis of the available epigraphic and literary materials we might try to draw a rough picture of the socio-political system prevailing in the Rajput principalities about 1000 A. D. and then look back to find out how far, if at all, its component elements and its colours were non-Indian in origin. I suggest this date with a view to keeping out the extraneous impact of the Turkish invasions which initiated a new process of socio-political transformation. If our survey reveals considerable admixture of non-Indian, i. e. Central Asian or 'Scythic', elements with Indian elements conforming to earlier patterns, we might take it as corroborative evidence in support of the theory of foreign origin of the Rajputs. If, on the other hand, traces of such admixture are found to be comparatively faint or inconclusive, this would be an additional argument in favour of indigenous origin of the Rajputs.

This technique of inquiry is not likely to be entirely unprofitable; but it has its difficulties. To sort out different racial elements in a composite socio-political organization is an extremely difficult task; investigators are sometimes likely to be misled by superficial resemblances between ideas and institutions which have no real basic similarity. On the whole, success is bound to be partial. Again, in speaking of Indian and non-Indian elements I have over-simplified the problem, for Indian elements had a diversity of origin and complexion which must be taken into account. Two broad streams might be distinguished : the ancient *varnasrama* system dominating the life and thought of the upper classes and forming the basis of the orthodox social hierarchy, and the unrecorded ideas and customs which held together the aboriginal or tribal communities in Rajasthan. It is from this weaker group that the Rajputs, claiming to be Kshatriyas, seized lands which formed the basis of 'feudalism' and the clan system. According to Tod, Edur with its woods and mountains was given to Goha by the 'vana putras' or 'children of the forest,' and it was 'one of the young savages' who, 'cutting his finger, applied the blood as the teeka of sovereignty to his forehead.' The principality of the Kachhwas was 'an assemblage of communities, the territories of which have been wrested from the aboriginal tribes, or from independent chieftains.' The Mers, a branch of the

aboriginal Minas, gave their name to the tract of land which they inhabited, viz. a 'portion of the Aravali chain between Komulmeer and Ajmeer, a space of about ninety miles in length, and varying in breadth from six to twenty.' There are scattered references in historical records to struggles between the Rajputs who were either immigrants from abroad or interlopers from adjoining regions, and the aboriginal tribes who had been settled in Rajasthan from time immemorial; but no attempt has been made by modern scholars to show how the original tillers of the soil reacted to the new conditions in administration and economy. That they were not absorbed in the ruling community is clear enough; they retained to a large extent the distinctive features of their traditional socio-economic organization. If they were borrowers in certain respects, it is fairly safe to assume that the Rajputs who put themselves on the top did not completely escape from the influence of tribal ideas and practices. In such cases a simple one-way traffic is very rare indeed.

The intermixture of diverse elements flowing from the two groups - Rajaputras and Vanaputras - would be a fascinating subject for historical and sociological study. Take, for example, a peculiar custom prevailing in Rajasthan as also in Central India. Brookes says in his *History of Meywar*: "In each Rajput family and even in each Bheel Pal, especially in case of incompetency in the head, there is a 'Baujgurrea' who is consulted in all important transactions, and without whose advice nothing is undertaken". From the family this institution seems to have migrated to the State. Mewar had her 'Baujgurrea' and the position was by custom the hereditary privilege of the head of the Chundawats. In Central India - where there was a projection of Rajput ascendancy in society and politics - a noble who, without occupying a distinct office, served as the ruler's counsellor was known as 'Baujgurrea'. In these cases we have an example of political extension of a socio-economic custom. It would be interesting to inquire whether the 'Baujgurrea' originated among the Bhils and migrated to the Rajput society and State. It is not unlikely that the Vanaputras not only provided land for the settlement of the Rajaputras but also made many-sided contributions to the latter's socio-political organization.

The rudiments of 'feudalism' are not likely to be found in tribal society except perhaps in pre-Rajput days when the tribes might have had something like a primitive monarchical organisation



of their own. But it is quite possible that the clan system of the Rajputs, unless imported in a full-fledged or even nebulous shape from foreign lands, was directly related to tribal organization among the aborigines. In studying this fascinating but very complicated problem it would not be enough to employ the conventional techniques of historical investigation, for we have to depend almost solely on materials other than written records. We have to borrow ideas, methods and techniques from allied disciplines such as Anthropology and Sociology. Here is an excellent field for interdisciplinary studies. If concrete results are achieved, the concept of India's unity in diversity will be strengthened by the demonstration of a new type of socio-political interaction between tribal and martial communities.

Whatever the special subject of study or the technique of investigation might be, no student of history can afford to forget the precious dictum mentioned by Lord Acton in his Inaugural Lecture delivered at Cambridge in June 1895: "History, to be above evasion or dispute, must stand on documents, not on opinions." This must be the attitude of those workers who - to quote Lord Acton's words again - 'with the compass of criticism in their hands, sail the uncharted sea of original research.' The history of Rajasthan is indeed an 'uncharted sea'; it has so far attracted only a few bold navigators whose track the rising generations are now called upon to follow. Before new voyages are undertaken the essential instrument - 'the compass of criticism' - must be firmly held in hand. 'Opinions' are important, but not important enough to override or even modify 'documents,' i.e. trustworthy source materials. As J. S. Mill said, "There is no part of our knowledge which it is more useful to obtain at first hand - to go to the fountain-head for - than our knowledge of History."

Distinguished authorities have given so much weight to the first hand study of historical materials that it is sometimes described as an end in itself apart from its results. Lord Acton said, "For us the estimate of authorities, the weighing of testimony, is more meritorious than the potential discovery of new matter." A modern historian, J.M. Thompson, goes so far as to say that "the essence of history is not the learning of facts but the judging of evidence." In 'the judging of evidence' it is hardly possible for weak mortals to free themselves fully from the subtle inroads of subjectivity; but the constant aim must be to collect and weigh materials in such a man-

ner that "history might be lifted above contention, and made an accepted tribunal, and the same for all."

To my mind there is no contradiction between 'the judging of evidence' and 'the learning of facts': if you judge evidence aright you will learn true facts. Again, the inevitable corollary of the learning of true facts is their interpretation, for facts standing in isolation - with their import unrevealed - would be a meaningless array of uninviting particles. The "main thing," Lord Acton said, "to learn is not the art of accumulating material, but the sublimer art of investigating it, of discerning truth from falsehood and certainly from doubt." It is through rational balanced and honest interpretation that the truth emerging from critical examination of evidence can be given a coherent and meaningful form and used for illumination of the mind.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am afraid I have exhausted your patience by my rambling discourse. As there is a large vacuum in the field of Rajput studies there is much to say, and I would have very much liked to draw your attention to some other important problems. But interesting papers written by zealous scholars are ready to be read and discussed, and it would be wrong on my part to encroach upon their time. I thank you all most sincerely for the kind and patient hearing you have given me, and I seek your hearty co-operation in making this session of the Rajasthan History Congress a great success.