



1: GOLD CROWN FROM TILLYA TEPE, 1ST CENTURY AD

THIS ASTONISHING OBJECT WAS FOUND IN THE TOMB OF A NOMADIC WOMAN. IT WAS DESIGNED AND ASSEMBLED FROM DIFFERENT PIECES WHICH ALLOWED IT TO BE FOLDED WHEN NOT IN USE. IT IS THE ULTIMATE EXAMPLE OF PORTABLE NOMADIC WEALTH.

Afghanistan: Crossroads of the Ancient World
Supported by Bank of America
Merill Lynch

3 March – 3 July 2011
Room 35
Admission charge

Afghanistan: Crossroads of the Ancient World will highlight some of the most important archaeological discoveries from ancient Afghanistan and will display precious and unique pieces on loan from the National Museum of Afghanistan in Kabul currently undergoing reconstruction.

The geographical position, overland connections and history ensured that it was a region which enjoyed close relations with its neighbours in Central Asia, Iran, India and China, as well as more distant cultures stretching as far as the

Mediterranean. Bank of America Merrill Lynch is supporting this unique opportunity to see rare treasures of Afghanistan's cultural heritage in the UK.

The exhibition will showcase over 200 stunning objects belonging to the National Museum of Afghanistan, accompanied by selected items from the British Museum. The artefacts range from Classical sculptures, polychrome ivory inlays originally attached to imported Indian furniture, enamelled Roman glass and polished stone tableware brought from Egypt, to delicate inlaid gold personal ornaments worn by the nomadic elite. Together they showcase the trading and cultural connections of Afghanistan and how it benefited from being on an important crossroads of the ancient world.

All of these objects were found between 1937 and 1978 and were feared to have been lost following the Soviet invasion in 1979 and the civil war which followed, when the National Museum was rocketed and figural displays were later destroyed by the Taliban. Their survival is due to a handful of Afghan officials who deliberately concealed them and they are now exhibited here in a travelling exhibition designed to highlight to the international community the importance of the cultural heritage of Afghanistan and the remarkable achievements and trading connections of these past civilisations.

The earliest objects in the exhibition are part of a treasure found at the site of Tepe Fullol which dates to 2000 BC, representing the earliest gold objects found in Afghanistan and how already it was connected by trade with urban civilisations in ancient Iran and Iraq. The later finds come from three additional sites, all in northern Afghanistan, and dating between the 3rd century BC and 1st century AD. These are Ai Khanum, a

Hellenistic Greek city on the Oxus river and on the modern border with Tajikistan; Begram, a capital of the local Kushan dynasty whose rule extended from Afghanistan into India; and Tillya Tepe, ("Hill of Gold"), the find spot of an elite nomadic cemetery.



opium

The Company grew opium in India. They were looking for something that the Chinese would accept instead of silver, to pay for the goods they bought at Canton. Opium was a valued medicine which could deaden pain, assist sleep and reduce stress. But it was also seriously habit forming and some Chinese were addicted. Was this the answer?

In 1773 the Company assumed the monopoly of opium growing in Bengal, now their territory. The opium was sold at auction in Calcutta and smuggled into China. The Company ships did not carry it because the Emperor banned its sale. But the cash they received from the auctions was laundered through

London or Calcutta. With this they got the silver they needed.

After the Company's trade monopoly was abolished in 1834, smuggling of opium into China by European private traders intensified. The Chinese state was deeply disturbed at this and threatened force. Britain was prepared to defend 'free trade' and, in 1840, they went to war. These 'Opium wars' led to a humiliating defeat of the Chinese and a trade treaty which ceded Hong Kong to the British.

Ethical trading it was not

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tea

Tea was the new wonder commodity for the Company. It began to trade in Chinese tea in the early 1650s but it was not an instant success. At the time people in Britain drank ale for breakfast (water was largely unfit to drink) so there was a 'market gap' for a safe, thirst quenching drink. Tea was not unknown but it was a luxury item favoured by the aristocracy.

Brewers, sensing competition, persuaded the British Government to tax tea. Adulteration, smuggling and the Boston Tea Party were direct results. However, once the Company had access to Canton and the political issues were settled, demand took off. Green varieties were favoured initially but black teas soon took over in popularity.

In 1713 the Company brought in 214,000 lbs (97,078 kgs); by 1813 the total was almost 32 million lbs (14.5 million kgs)



TEA CURING NO 4 IN A SERIES OF PRINTS, THE PROCESS OF PLANTING, GROWING AND CURING TEA. 1808.

SCENE IN A TEA WAREHOUSE AT THE CANTON FACTORIES BY A CHINESE ARTIST C 1800

porcelain

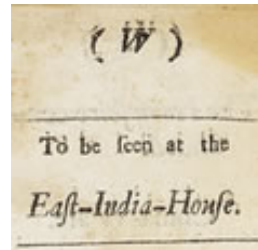
Porcelain was a useful commodity. It was cheap and people wanted to buy it. Although it did not make the Company rich, it was good to transport, adding ballast to the ships without tainting the tea cargoes.

The Chinese craftsmen were very versatile. They were long used to giving customers what they wanted and were ready to produce goods in any shape or pattern. They used traditional patterns like 'rice grain' as well as developing designs such as 'willow pattern' in response to western taste.

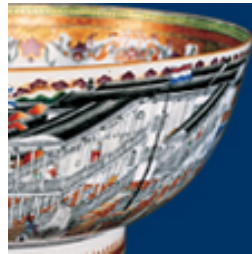
In 1713 alone the Company brought in over 517,000 piece



TEA PICKING NO 2 IN A SERIES OF PRINTS, THE PROCESS OF PLANTING, GROWING AND CURING TEA. 1808.



EAST INDIA CO SALE CATALOGUE FOR MARCH 1704 - EXTRACTS DETAILING PORCELAIN IMPORTS.



PUNCHBOWL IN COLOURED ENAMELS WITH A CONTINUOUS SCENE OF THE FACTORIES AT CANTON. C. 1780-90

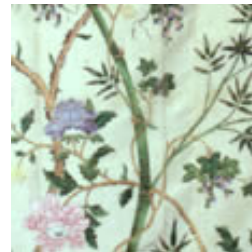
silk

Chinese silk had been carried along the Silk Road into Europe for centuries. But only the rich could afford it. Most ordinary people wore wool or linen. The Company began to import raw silk for the weavers in London as well as bulk purchases of silk cloth.

Chinese manufacturers began to produce designs and styles especially for the European market. Suddenly silk clothing was within reach of all but the very poor.



ENGLISH AND DUTCH FACTORIES ON THE BANKS OF THE RED RIVER AT HANOI, ENGRAVED FROM A DRAWING BY SAMUEL BARON 1686.



SILK TEXTILES COLLECTION OF MR & MRS INDAR PASRICHA, LONDON



EXPORT ALBUM OF COURT COSTUMES. MANUSCRIPT PAINTINGS ON SILK BASED ON THE HUANG CHAO LI QI TU (ILLUSTRATIONS OF CEREMONIAL OBJECTS). 19TH CENTURY

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trade

The Portuguese were the only Europeans allowed by the Chinese state into its ports. They had set up a trading place at Macao in the 1550s. In 1622 the Dutch established Fort Zeelandia on nearby Taiwan. They were expelled by Koxinga in 1661, and the Company took over their base. As the Ch'ing Government relaxed trade controls they moved to the mainland.

The Company's first trading post in China was at Amoy. Goods on offer here included fans, porcelain figures of animals and deities, screens, cabinets and painted sheets of wallpaper.

Later factories were set up at Chusan, an island near Shanghai, and at the great city of Canton on the Pearl River.

Once trade at Canton was established, the Company focused on tea, silk and porcelain.



**THE WATERFRONT AT CANTON
FROM AN 8-METRE-LONG
SCROLL OF THE PEARL RIVER
FROM WHAMPOA TO THE CITY,
PAINTED BY A CHINESE ARTIST
C 1760**

why china

The Chinese empire was huge. The Company wanted to buy silk and sell English goods direct to the millions of Chinese but the country was largely closed to foreigners.

In 1644 Manchu invaders from beyond the Great Wall captured Peking and established the Ch'ing dynasty (which would last until 1911).

The displaced Ming Emperor had a strong ally in the great pirate fleet commander Cheng Ch'eng-kung - the legendary Koxinga. Koxinga held out against the Ch'ing forces in the region around Amoy before transferring to Taiwan.

The war effort needed guns, which the English could supply, so in 1670 his son invited the East India Company to trade.



**CHINESE PALACES &
GARDENS
ALBUM OF EXPORT PAINTINGS
BY CHINESE ARTISTS, EARLY
19TH CENTURY**

background

Asia used to be known as "The East Indies". Pepper, spices, medicinal drugs, aromatic woods, perfumes and silks were rare commodities in Europe, and therefore valuable. Trading in them could make you a fortune. And for this chance many were willing to risk their lives.

There were three great empires in Asia:

- the Ottoman Turkish
- the Mughal
- the Chinese

Each was wealthy and sophisticated and had its own international trading network. How could Europe open up its own trading routes to Asia?

Rome, Constantinople and Venice had all created successful trade links with the East. But this was only a beginning.



THE TRADING WORLD OF ASIA



MAP OF ASIA, ASIA NOVITER DELINEATA, PUBLISHED AT AMSTERDAM BY WILLIAM BLAEU, C. 1640

iberian exploration

The "sea route to the Indies" was opened after Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1498 and his fellow countryman, Vasco da Gama, crossed the Indian Ocean to reach Calicut, a rich trading city on the Indian coast.

Aggressive and heavily armed, the Portuguese established a chain of coastal trading posts extending from East Africa to Japan and effectively gained control over the lucrative spice trade.

Following the first voyage of Columbus, who was looking for a route to the East Indies, Spain controlled vast areas of the New World of the Americas. By 1600 the Spanish were bringing huge quantities of South American silver into Europe.



PORTRAIT OF VASCO DA GAMA

dutch exploration

The Dutch used their merchant fleet - the largest in Europe - to distribute Asian imports from Lisbon. As a result of working closely with the Portuguese they were able to collect valuable maps and sailing directions. The first Dutch trading voyage of 1595 returned with a cargo of pepper from Bantam.

The race was on.

With a head start, more money, more ships and a far more focused national purpose, they were to offer the English strong competition in the years ahead.



VOC COAT OF ARMS

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england

By 1600 the Elizabethan Age was drawing to a close. This was the time of Shakespeare and Marlowe and a growing Protestant faith. The English were successful pirates and privateers and showed increasing superiority at sea.

Although England's capital, London was still a relatively insignificant city and the country was relatively poor. But a new English pride was taking shape. And change and a commercial Renaissance were coming



QUEEN ELIZABETH I (1533-1603). QUEEN OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND. FROM: BAZILI: LOGIA, A BOOKE OF KINGS. ILLUS.: RENOLD ELSTRAKE 1618

foundation of the EIC

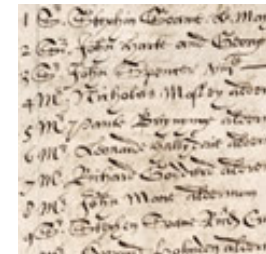
Like the Dutch, the English wanted a key role in the spice trade. Following a year of fund raising and political negotiation, the 'Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies' was given 'royal approval' by a charter from Queen Elizabeth I on 31 December 1600.

218 subscribers to the new enterprise raised £68,373 - a massive amount at a time when a skilled carpenter was earning about 7 pence a day. The Company was granted a monopoly on all English trade east of the Cape of Good Hope.

All of Asia was theirs for the trading



THE ARMS USED BY THE EAST INDIA COMPANY UNTIL 1709, A PLASTER CAST OF A CEILING BOSS IN POPLAR CHAPEL.



THE FIRST SUBSCRIPTION LIST FOR THE ENGLISH EAST INDIA COMPANY, 22 SEPTEMBER 1599.

ship building

The Company made London an important financial and ship-building centre. It bought land in places like Blackwall on the River Thames to build its own ships. Soon it had the largest private fleet in England. But each 'East Indiaman' had a limited life expectancy - 4 voyages to Asia over 8 to 10 years. Hiring ships made better commercial sense.

Blackwall Yard was eventually sold to private owners who continued to build specifically for the Company. By 1806 the Company had its own dockyard and enormous blocks of warehouses in the city of London.

Between 1600-1833 the Company made about 4600 ship voyages from London. It was England's (later Britain's) single biggest commercial enterprise. Though for Asia it was initially a relatively small player.



BLACKWELL YARD ON THE RIVER THAMES 1784.



THE EARL OF ABERGAVENNY OFF SOUTHSEA BY THOMAS. LUNY 1801

first voyage

The Company bought four ships for the first English Voyage – the Dragon, Hector, Ascension and Susan. Carrying 500 men and 110 guns these set sail from London in February 1601 under the command of James Lancaster. More than 100 men had died by the time they rounded the Cape of Good Hope.

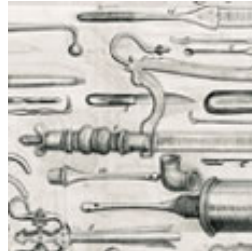
It took 16 months to reach their first Asian port in Sumatra. Pepper was available in neighbouring Java and it was here, at Bantam, that Lancaster set up the first European trading post in 1602. All four ships returned safely to England in 1603, their holds full of pepper.

The East India Company was in business.

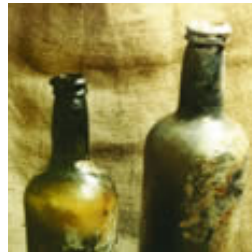
on board ship

Conditions on board were always cramped, unsanitary and difficult. An early East Indiaman was rarely more than 37 metres long by 11 metres wide. That's only about four times the length and width of a London bus!

The seamen's diet grew worse as a voyage progressed. Food was hard-baked bread, beer, cider, wine, dry salted beef, pickled pork and dried peas and beans. Fresh fish surprisingly played little part. Some ships carried chaplains and doctors; but as women at this time generally didn't travel, female passengers were few and far between.



SEVENTEENTH CENTURY SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, FROM 1639 EDITION OF WOODALL. C.77.H.18



SHIPWRECK MATERIAL BOTTLES FROM THE EARL OF ABERGAVENNY COURTESY OF ED CUMMING



A TYPICAL EAST INDIAMAN COMPARED WITH A LONDON BUS.

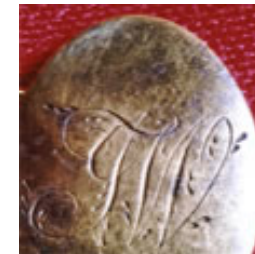
hazards

Life at sea was hard. Asian ports harboured many unknown diseases against which the seamen had no resistance. Those on board risked enemy action, accidental fire and storms.

Shipwreck was the greatest danger, though in fact only 5% of voyages were total losses. These were good enough odds for the East India Company not to bother with cargo insurance. Careful ship owners covered their risk on the developing London marine insurance market.



ENTRY OF A DEATH IN LOG IN THE EAST INDIAMAN ROCHESTER.



CAPTAIN WORDSWORTH'S CUFFLINKS COURTESY OF ED CUMMING, WEYMOUTH UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

cargoes

What did the English have to offer Asia? The answer is, very little apart from silver.

England made woollen textiles. But for humid climates they were simply not suitable. The Company's merchants knew this, but the monopoly charter obliged them to

export a percentage of their cargoes in English products. So the ships carried the woollen cloth along with unwrought metals, looking-glasses and re-exported goods like coral and ivory. Guns were rarely traded though this was one area where England was technically superior.

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SAMPLES OF ENGLISH BROADCLOTH SUITABLE FOR THE MARKET AT MOKHA, 1721



**SPANISH SILVER COINS
COURTESY OF ED CUMMING,
WEYMOUTH UNDERWATER
ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP**

EXPANSION

why expand

The English needed to dispose of their broadcloth and to find other Asian goods for barter. They also wanted to restock the national silver reserves.

They were prepared to act aggressively to get what they wanted. In 1611 they took thousands of pieces of Indian textiles by force from Gujarati vessels at the entrance to the Red Sea. Because they did not regard themselves as pirates they made sure that they handed over broadcloth in return. In their eyes 'exchange was no robbery'



**CHARLES ALLARD,
EXACTISSIMA ASIAE. 1666**

japan

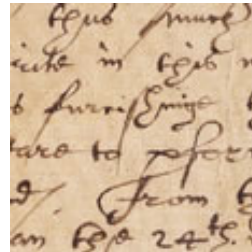
The Company knew that an Englishman, William Adams, was living in Japan in great favour with its military dictator. It believed it could buy Chinese silk in Southeast Asia and resell it at a great profit in Japan for locally mined silver.

It didn't work.

Enough silk was never available and the English Commander ignored Adams' advice. The Japanese market was particularly driven by the whims of fashion and the English were unable to respond. The trading post in Hirado lasted 10 years, closing in 1623.



**PAINTING OF THE KAMIGAMO
SHRINE, ONE OF THE LEADING
SHRINES IN KYOTO. THIS IS
ONE OF 50 PAINTINGS
DEPICTING FAMOUS SITES OF
JAPAN, BROUGHT BACK BY
ENGELBERT KAEMPFER
SLOANE 5252, NO.49**



**LETTER FROM RICHARD COCKS
ATHIRADO TO WILLIAM ADAMS
AND RICHARD WICKHAM AT
EDO,
E/3/1**

iran

Iran was one of the few places where English woollens could be sold in quantity. It was also a source of very high quality raw silk and silk cloth. Both were considered superior to those from China.

The Company imported raw silk and a domestic silk weaving industry was started in England. Its weavers were increasingly unhappy about ready-made silk cloth being imported.

An Act was passed in 1699 prohibiting 'the use or wearing of all

silks...of the manufacture of Persia, China or East India'. But, apart from the austere Cromwellian era, demand for the fabric remained high.



**SAMPLES OF SILK THREAD
AVAILABLE IN IRAN 1697
G/29/1 F233**

yemen

The East India Company was the first western company to be directly involved in the coffee trade, before it had been seen in Europe. At first coffee was only available at the Turkish port of Mocha (now Yemen) but the Dutch and, much later, the English set up their own plantations.

It became an international commodity and the first 'new drink' craze to sweep England. By the end of the 17th century coffee was more popular there than tea



**THE COFFEE PLANT
IN ELIZABETH BLACKWELL, A
CURIOUS HERBAL CONTAINING
FIVE HUNDRED CUTS OF THE
MOST USEFUL PLANTS.
LONDON, 2 VOL. SAMUEL
HARDING: 1737. 452.F.1 &
452.F.2**

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Time: 00:47

INDIA

why india

The Company was keen to find a direct source of Indian textiles.

The Portuguese already had fortified strongholds in India but the English needed imperial permission to set up their own trading posts.

In 1608 William Hawkins, commander of the Hector, was sent to ask the Mughal Emperor. He impressed Jahangir with his grasp of Turkish and ability to drink wine but failed to get agreement for an English factory. It took the arrival of a 'proper' ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe, sent by King James I in 1615, before the Company was able to set up a base in India



THE EMPEROR JAHANGIR AS A YOUTH BY A MUGHAL ARTIST C 1620-30



THE CITY OF SURAT, FROM A DUTCH ENGRAVING REPRODUCED IN JOHN OGILBY'S ASIA, LONDON 1673



CITY OF LAHORE - SECTION FROM A PANORAMIC SCROLL OF THE CITY BY AN INDIAN ARTIST, MID 19TH CENTURY.

culture & curiosity

The Mughal Empire covered northern and central India. It was perhaps the world's most civilised centre of power. Its glittering court at Agra, Delhi and Lahore, was filled with all the magnificence and luxury

that Asia could supply.

Asians and Europeans were mutually curious. The Emperor Jahangir (c. 1605-1627), like his father Akbar, prided himself as a connoisseur and an artistic patron. He was very interested in the outside world and his many court artists were kept busy, copying and interpreting examples of European life.



VIRGIN & CHILD BY A MUGHAL ARTIST, 1630 JOHNSON 14.2



CAPTAIN KNOX RECEIVING A BUDDHIST MANUSCRIPT, NEPAL 1803



GHAZI-UD-DIN HAIDAR AND LORD & LADY MOIRA AT A BANQUET ADD. OR. 1815

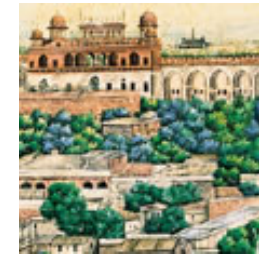
factors & forts

The Company had a fairly loose management structure. Its main centres at Bantam, Surat, Madras, Bombay and Calcutta were called Presidencies. Headed by a President or Governor, and supported by a council of experienced men, each looked after a number of factories (the trading posts). It was not easy.

London faced the uphill task of keeping faraway workers sober, honest and hardworking. India could only communicate with HQ as fast as a ship could sail. All business was carried out in writing. The result survives today as the massive East India Company archive in the British Library.



FORT WILLIAM, CALCUTTA, BY GEORGE LAMBERT AND SAMUEL SCOTT, C.1730



A SECTION FROM A PANORAMIC SCROLL OF THE CITY OF DELHI VIEWED FROM THE LAHORE GATES OF THE RED FORT, BY MAZHAR 'ALI KHAN, 1846.



FACTORY PAINTING 1790-1800. BACK VIEW OF AN ENGLISH FACTORY IN BENGAL(?) WITH HIGH SURROUNDING WALL.

private trade

At first the Company tried to stop its employees, known as servants, making money on the side. But in 1674 it introduced rules for private trade.

Some commodities were still entirely reserved for the Company. But there were concessions. Ship owners and officers could carry a certain percentage of their own cargo to and from Asia. Servants and ex-employees, still settled in the factories, could trade port-to-port in Asia. They could also send back selected goods to England. Precious stones, musk, ambergris, certain spices and textiles interwoven with gold and silver thread were all legitimate.

Survive and you could make a lot of money.

FORT WILLIAM, CALCUTTA, BY GEORGE LAMBERT AND SAMUEL SCOTT, C.1730.

textiles

Indian textiles were much sought after. They had fabulous designs which were, very importantly, die-fast so they could be washed without losing their amazing colours.

Over centuries a village-based hand loom industry had evolved in India. The three main production centres were Gujarat, Coromandel Coast and Bengal. They produced enormous quantities of different kinds of cloth or 'piece goods' as the Company called them.



C.1850-60 AD.OR.1714



A CLOTH MERCHANT, SEATED IN HIS SHOP, SELLING CHINTZ TO A CUSTOMER, BY A TANJORE ARTIST, C.1800



A PILE-CARPET LOOM AT HUNSUR, MYSORE 1850

politics

A chain of events started in India that would change the world. And they involved the Company.

By 1750 the Mughal Empire was in a state of collapse. Regional states emerged in India and the Company began to get involved in power politics. It raised its own armies and prepared for war.

Having seen off the rival French in the Carnatic, in 1765 the Company assumed the Diwani of Bengal. A trading company from England was now responsible for the civil, judicial and revenue administration of India's richest province, with some 20 million inhabitants. It was now a regional state in India.

The bleeding of Bengal and the process which created the British Raj had begun.



OFFICERS OF THE GUN LASCAR CORPS.1806



ROBERT CLIVE RECEIVING THE DIWANI OF BENGAL
