

...al, Held in June-July at Puri.
... Raja Parba held in mid

celebrate the sprouting

(October) and five
al of youth is

of Kartik
rabati.
second

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at Balangir & Baliahal in Balasore.

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gs, decorative items
ad. The village
Puri is well
ative skills
Also in
y of

artisans make golden grass mats,
baskets, small boxes and sell at
weekly markets called haats
and at fairs organised by the
government.

Baliahal in Balasore famous for
mats woven on looms.

In Ganjam (now Gajapati) there are
mat makers, and carvers of betel nut.

They make small intricately carved
containers, miniature statuettes. Large
variety of baskets of all sizes for all purposes.

Most shops and stalls in haats and melas use a
variety of baskets as shelves for display. Local
spice sellers sell their spices in baskets. Toys and
sweets for children come packed in baskets at
shops and temples. Bird cages and conical
fishing baskets are also popular.

There is a hardy grass abundant in
drought prone areas called sabai used for
baskets, mats and furniture. Sabai grass
rope is woven intricately on bamboo



clay toy
decorated. In
women make
tinsel and mirror

Silver work & O

The craftsmen of the Swarnakara and K
ornaments.

Silver filigree work is a famous tradition since
lac ornaments, boxes, toys made with fine t
popular.

Silversmiths live in Cuttack where there is a
shops which sell intricate weblike necklac
frames, boxes, earrings, brooches and ever
Ganjam has silversmiths who make fish
so skillfully assembled as to make it mov
Tribal jewellery include Klapatri (res
screw-pine plant), Jhara Kathi (a kind
pendant chains), Bakra-Dumari or T
shaped ornament with pendants) and
ornament with a hook). To keep the ha
ornamental net called Mathajali or Jui
set called Moti matha jali or Mukta ja
on the line of parting the hair. Mathar
The other ornaments are jhillim
Chudamani and Rahurekha. Nakac
Guma, Manika Guma, Nathi Gu
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Masks

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Paddy, Leather, Paper & Beads

Craftspersons string fresh paddy together to make
intricate paddy crafts including jewellery boxes,
in the shape of auspicious coconut shells to
celebrate the new harvest.

In Dasapalla craftspersons make leather belts,
purser, bags and shoes.

Ornaments are made with terracotta, brass and
bell metal, dhokra and lacquer beads. Also
ornaments made from silver coins, copper, brass
beads in Dhenkenal.

Potts

Potters (Kum
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designs box
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Woodwork

In Puri craftsmen m
These masks repr
from the Ram
Mahabharata.

In Bhubaneswar and Puri
craftsmen make beautiful wooden ma
used in Sahi Yatra, a form of processio
representing characters from the Ramayan
Headgear for these masks are intricately
sholapith (bamboo pith) and zari, (tinsel) or
These head gear are made by sholap
carvers living near Puri. Danda Natak a
folk theatre form used the hollow
wooden horse - called "Chaitri
Ghoda" with painted head and

cloth body. It is said that once the Chhau dance was also
part of Danda Natak. This form also uses wooden masks

2

COLONIAL RULE AND CRAFTS

WHEN you see the wonderful displays in the crafts museums of India you will not be surprised to learn that crafts formed a major part of our exports throughout history. In fact, India's crafts communities produced such fine and artistic objects that merchants travelled from far to acquire these goods. Seventeenth century courtly patronage, trade, the *jajmani* system and the demand for everyday utility crafts by the rural population (until the second half of the seventeenth century), resulted in a steady home market and a worldwide reputation for Indian crafts.

Tavernier, a French traveller in Mughal India, states that the Ambassador of the Shah of Persia (CE 1628–1641), on his return from India, presented his master with a coconut shell, set with jewels, containing a muslin turban thirty yards in length, so exquisitely fine that it could scarcely be felt by the touch.

TRADE

India has had a long history of trade in craft with other countries beginning from the Harappan Civilisation 5000 years ago. Over the centuries, trade with Greece and Rome grew and historical evidence can be found in literature and archaeological excavations. Flourishing trade led to overland routes like the Silk Route and brought silk from China through Asia into Europe. There are accounts of caravans, and



traders speaking different languages, meeting at trading stations along the route. Ship-building centres and ports developed along India's long coastline. Sea routes to the Mediterranean countries, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, South-east Asia and China are mentioned both in Sangam literature and foreign accounts.

By the time of the Mauryan empire (300 BCE) traders and craftsmen groups, who had become wealthy and powerful through trade, were able to donate substantially for the building of Buddhist monasteries. There were carpenters and blacksmiths, jewellers and goldsmiths, weavers and dyers, perfumers and stone carvers among others. Constant trade with the Middle East and South-east Asia was already an important cornerstone of the economy.

In the area of textiles, to South-east Asia we exported sarongs, to the Middle East went the finest and most expensive muslins, to West Africa went Christian altar fronts, to Europe silk and woollen fabrics, dress



materials and bed-hangings. All these fabrics were considered 'luxury goods' in these countries.

The pattern of trade from the Coromandel Coast was triangular. Arabs carried gold and silver (bullion) to the Coromandel Coast, exchanged these for textiles, and then exchanged the latter in Malaysia for spices, with which they returned to the Middle East.

Throughout the ancient and medieval periods the fame of Indian cotton textiles, gems and jewels, and spices like pepper and cardamom, ivory and sandalwood continued to make trade a lucrative business. Gems like pearls, and precious stones like diamonds gave to India the reputation of a fabled land of riches and natural resources. This reputation of being a land of riches and extraordinary skills, tempted traders from Europe, who were willing to go to war, and to risk their lives in order to get a share of the profit from Indian trade.



Marco Polo's (1254–1324) account of his travels to the East makes a reference to Golconda, now in Andhra Pradesh.

This kingdom produces diamonds. Let me tell you how they are got. You must know that in the kingdom there are many mountains in which diamonds are found, as you will hear. When it rains the water rushes down through these mountains, scouring its way through mighty gorges and caverns. When the rain has stopped and the water drained away, then men go in search of diamonds through these gorges from which the water has come, and they find plenty. In summer, when there is not a drop of water to be found then the diamonds are found among the mountains.

Then in a more fanciful mood he records

Another means by which they get diamonds is this. When the eagles eat the flesh, they also eat—that is they swallow—the diamonds. Then at night when the eagle comes back, it deposits the diamonds it has swallowed with its droppings. So men come and collect these droppings, and there they find diamonds in plenty.... You must know that in the entire world diamonds are found nowhere else except this kingdom alone.

—RONALD LATHAM

Marco Polo: the Traveller

INDIA AS A TEXTILE PRODUCTION HUB

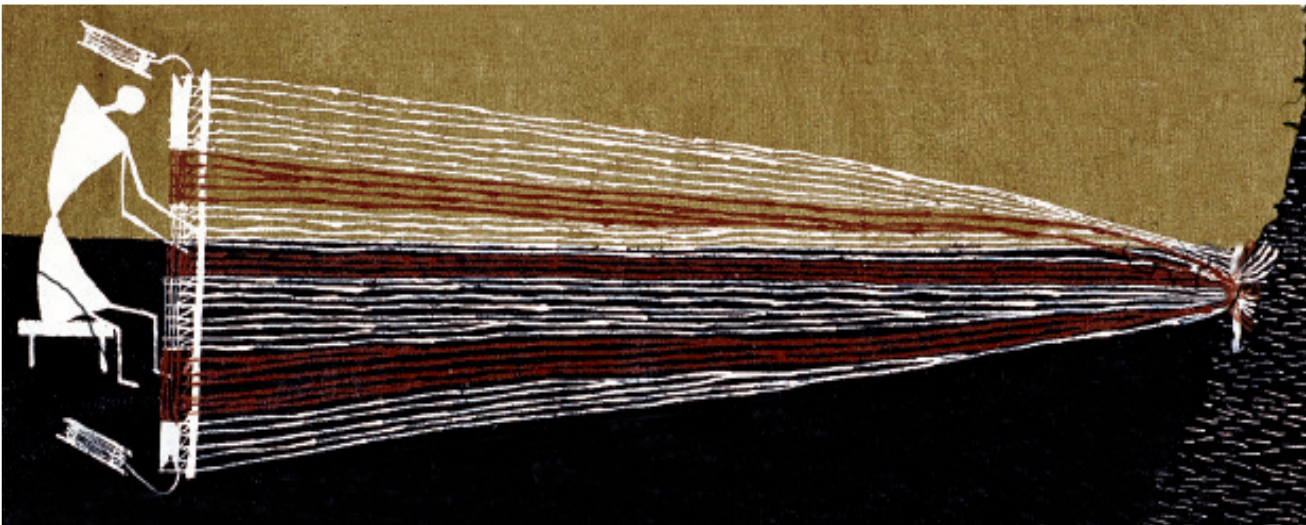
“Everyone from the Cape of Good Hope (in Africa) to China, man and woman is clothed from head to foot, in the products of Indian looms,” is how a Portuguese traveller put it. India was, till the advent of colonialism, the largest exporter of textiles in the world.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was trade in textiles and in spices, essential for preserving meat when refrigeration did not exist, that initially brought European traders to India. A triangular trade developed with Britain transporting slaves from Africa to the Americas, to make enough profit and to get the bullion necessary for the purchase of Indian manufacture.

The adoption and rate of increase in the consumption of Indian textiles in the Western world during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was one of those astonishing processes of diffusion which is comparable to the discovery and spread of tobacco, potato, coffee or tea.

– K.N. CHAUDHURI

With the founding of the British East India Company in 1599, the English, and later the Dutch and the French, started exporting Indian textiles to London, for



re-export to the eastern Mediterranean. Very quickly, they realised the huge market for these textiles whose colours were permanent (i.e., they did not run). In Europe at the time, the techniques of 'fixing' dyes were unknown to craftsmen who applied coloured pigments to the textile, which ran or flaked off when the fabric was washed.

By 1625 a revolution in taste began in England. Most imported Indian textiles were used to decorate beds, the most precious item of household furniture. People were attracted by the bright colours and new floral patterns, which did not exist in European fabrics. From the second half of the seventeenth century, the demand for Indian chintz increased in England, France and the Netherlands.

Astute merchants realised they could reach an even bigger market by commissioning special designs. The East India Company therefore selected and guided the making of the *palempore*—the branched tree which became the famous tree-of-life design. Imitation Kashmiri shawls even began to be woven in England.

FACTORIES AND TRADE

Simultaneously in the seventeenth century the British East India Company and other trading companies from France and Holland established factories and new townships around the Indian coastline, where goods created specifically for the export market were stored. To produce these goods there was an increasing concentration and localisation, and a large-scale migration of crafts communities. Urban centres and coastal towns attracted craftsmen as a number of affluent consumers and a vast export market could be accessed from here.

By the nineteenth century several age-old crafts began to undergo change: the traditional *patua* artists of Orissa and Bengal picked up the skill of woodcut, block printing and created what we now called Kalighat Art, that the rich zamindars in rural Bengal patronised—while the markets of Varanasi specialised increasingly in brocades for the nouveau riche of Awadh and Bengal.





Adjusting to Change: the Traditional Patua Artist in Anglo-Indian Calcutta*

Within the rural folk tradition of the *pat* painting, the Kalighat paintings constituted a major departure. The inventiveness of this art lay in the way these migrant village *patuas* adapted to their changed urban environment, to its new facilities and pressures, from within the enclosed space of their traditional community and practice. The basic imperative of producing pictures cheaply, quickly and in vast numbers to cater to the growing market of the city, caused the main changes in the form and format of their work. It led, for instance, to the use of paper *vis-à-vis* cloth, to the adoption of watercolours in the place of gouache and tempera, and to the shift from the continuous narrative of scroll painting to single-frame images against blank backdrops. It also brought on a range of new themes and images in Kalighat pictures, some of which were drawn from subjects typical of British and Company paintings, while most emerged from the immediate social scenario of Calcutta's *babu* society in which these *patuas* struggled to orient themselves.

Pitted against the new society of Anglo-Indian Calcutta, the sharp sense of moral discomfort and disorder of the *patuas* expressed itself in a powerful repertoire of satirical images...

Their resilience against the wayward ways and demands of the city showed itself at the two important levels at which these painters stayed enclosed within their inherited community and conventions. Transferred to the city, these painters continued to stick rigidly to the village clans from which they had emerged, with the same hereditary and caste affiliations. Artistically, too, they continued to work within a markedly non-naturalistic, two-dimensional style, transforming on their own terms whatever new elements they drew on. Thus, the borrowed medium of watercolours was made to lend itself to the traditional format of flat, bright colouring; and shading was used along outlines mainly to highlight the rhythm of lines and the bloatedness of faces and figures—this lent itself brilliantly to the nature of their satire...

The main clientele of these cheap pictures was the common people of the city, who felt equally alienated from the changed values and westernised ways of Calcutta's high society.

—TAPATI GUHA-THAKURTA
The Making of New Indian Art

* now, Kolkata

The Kashmiri Shawl

The Kashmiri shawl was the mainstay of the valley's economy from approximately 1600 to 1860, over 250 years. It was a luxury textile, patronised by the Mughal, Afghan, Sikh and Dogra dynasties that ruled Kashmir successively. By the nineteenth century, it was popular in princely courts and commercial cities all over South Asia, leave alone Europe. As a result those in charge of the shawl manufacturing units strongly influenced the economy of this State, as the sale of shawls brought in more money than the entire land revenue of the State! At its peak in 1861 it generated an enormous revenue.

Aware that the shawl trade dominated the Kashmir economy, the Dogra rulers created a department, the Dagh-Shawl, that tried to control and extract taxes at every stage of the manufacture of every shawl. Duties were imposed on the import of *pashm*, on the dyeing, even on the completion of every single line of embroidery! These taxes became so oppressive that the ordinary shawl worker was paying five rupees out of every seven he earned to the State. Compounding their misery, the distribution of subsidised grain was also limited to shawl manufacture.

In spite of this tax, however, the Kashmiri shawl industry prospered towards the end of the nineteenth century with the increasing European demand for these prized articles of fashion.

But it was the imitation shawls manufactured in the Scottish town of Paisley that had a strong negative impact on the production of the Kashmiri shawl in the valley.

The shawl traders prospered and it was because of them and the tremendous demand for their luxury end product that the State stayed afloat. The percentage of their profit was typically 500 per cent. By 1871, shawls worth 28 lakh rupees were exported! By 1890, the State withdrew entirely, abolishing the department of the Dagh-Shawl.

In the Indian catalogue of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886, the serious consequences of abolishing the department has been described as follows:

The manufacture, which formerly brought half a million a year into Kashmir, is now well nigh moribund. Unless means are taken by government to preserve it, the art of weaving the finest shawl will probably be extinct fifteen to twenty years hence. The warehouses of London and Paris are full of shawls which find no purchasers, and the value in Kashmir has consequently fallen to a third of what it was ten years ago.



FROM CRAFT PRODUCER TO SUPPLIER OF RAW MATERIALS

Between 1800 and 1860, the Industrial Revolution transformed the manufacturing process across England and Europe, adversely impacting the craft trade in India.

In 1813, under pressure from the local textile industry, the British Government began imposing high taxes on the import of Indian textiles. British goods, on the other hand, had virtually free entry into India. The shattering results are well known: between 1814 and 1835 British cotton goods exported to India rose from one million yards to thirty-one million yards; while the value of Indian cotton goods exported in the same seventeen years fell to one-thirteenth its original size. The thriving textile towns, Dacca, Murshidabad, Surat, Madurai, were laid waste. Britain's Industrial Revolution demolished India's textile trade, and from being exporters of handloom textiles we became exporters of raw cotton and a market for imported mill-made cloth, which even undercut domestic textiles.

The new taxes that were imposed by the British, and the shifts in textile production left the peasants, who were now solely dependent on agriculture, even more vulnerable. In Europe, handloom weavers who had been displaced found jobs in the new industries, which also employed many women. But in India even men had few such alternatives. They flooded into the already impoverished agriculture labour market, making wages even lower. Not only were many thousands of people affected by the collapse of the textile industry, but also of the iron, glass, paper, pottery and jewellery industries.

"The misery hardly finds a parallel in the history of commerce. The bones of its cotton weavers are bleaching the plains of India," William Bentick, the Governor General himself wrote in 1834.



THE IMPACT OF COLONIALISM ON THE TEXTILE TRADE

Before 1860, three-fourths of raw cotton imports into Britain came from America. British cotton manufacturers had for long been worried about this dependence on American supplies.

In 1857, the Cotton Supply Association was founded in Britain and in 1859 the Manchester Cotton company was formed. Their objective was to encourage cotton production in every part of the world suited for its growth. India was seen as a country that could supply cotton to Lancashire if the American supply dried up. India possessed suitable soil, a climate favourable to cotton cultivation, and cheap labour.

When the American Civil War broke out in 1861, a wave of panic spread through cotton circles in Britain; raw cotton imports from America fell to less than three per cent. Frantic messages were sent to India and elsewhere to increase cotton exports to Britain. In Bombay*, cotton merchants visited the cotton districts to assess supplies and encourage cultivation. As cotton prices soared, exports increased to meet the British

Bombay harbour: a late-eighteenth-century drawing



* now, Mumbai



demand. So advances were given to urban *sahukars*, who in turn extended credit to those rural moneylenders who promised to secure the produce.

These developments had a profound impact on the Deccan countryside. The ryots in the Deccan suddenly found access to seemingly limitless credit. They were given ₹100 as advance for every acre they planted with cotton. *Sahukars* were more than willing to extend long term loans. By 1862 over 90 per cent of cotton imports into Britain came from India.

CREDIT DRIES UP

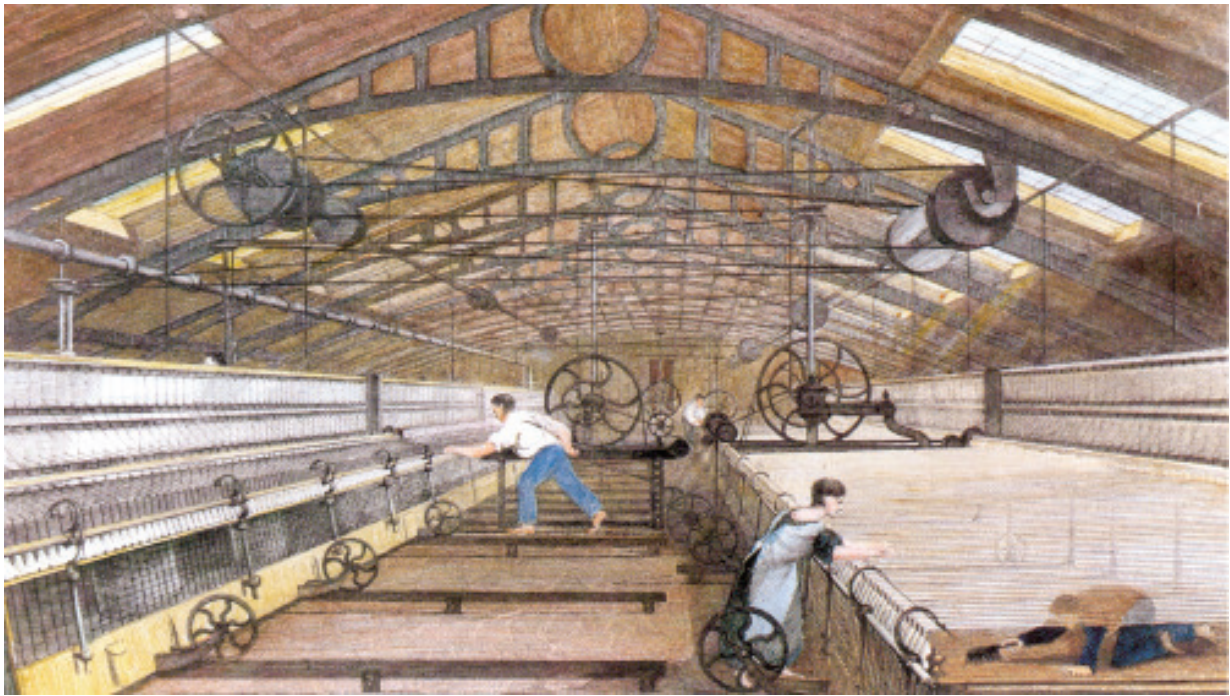
However, within a few years the American Civil War ended, cotton production in America revived and Indian cotton export to Britain steadily declined.

When the Civil War ended Britain resumed trade in cotton with America for two reasons: American cotton was a superior type (due to the longer, stronger fibres of its two domesticated native American species); secondly, cotton from plantations in the United States and the Caribbean was much cheaper as it was produced by unpaid slaves. By the mid-nineteenth century, in the United States, cultivating and harvesting cotton had become the leading occupation of slaves.

Export merchants and *sahukars* in the Deccan were no longer keen on extending long term credit. So they decided to close down their operations, restrict their advances to peasants, and demand repayment of outstanding debts, further impoverishing the farmers and the craftspeople.

Industrialisation in Britain

The advent of the Industrial Revolution in Britain transformed cotton manufacture, as textiles emerged as Britain's leading export. In 1738 Lewis Paul and John Wyatt of Birmingham, England, patented the Roller Spinning Machine, and the flyer-and-bobbin system for drawing cotton to a more even thickness using two sets of rollers. Later, the invention of the Spinning Jenny in 1764 enabled British weavers to produce cotton yarn and cloth at much faster rates. From the late eighteenth century onwards, the British city of Manchester acquired the nickname 'cottonopolis' due to the cotton industry's omnipresence within the city, and Manchester's role as the heart of the global cotton trade. Production capacity in Britain and the United States was further improved by the invention of the cotton gin by the American, Eli Whitney, in 1793.



A spinning factory in 1830

Improving technology and increasing control of world markets allowed British traders to develop a commercial chain in which raw cotton fibres were (at first) purchased from colonial plantations, processed into cotton cloth in the mills of Lancashire, and then re-exported on British ships to captive colonial markets in West Africa, India, and China (via Shanghai and Hong Kong).

The Industrial Revolution in England led to the reversal of trade in which cotton was exported from India to England and manufactured machine-made cotton cloth was brought back to India and sold. The colonial policy of supporting production of raw material in India for British industries and the consumption of British products in India greatly damaged the Indian economy. This along with devastating famines, over-taxation and diversion of revenues back to England were the primary factors for the deteriorating condition of the Indian crafts community. It was this devastating effect of industrialisation that influenced Gandhiji while his philosophy developed during the fight for independence from colonial rule.

RISE, FALL, RISE...

From the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, China and India controlled almost half of the global trade. This pattern continued till India became a part of the British Empire in the nineteenth century, and Chinese trade came to be increasingly controlled by those who controlled the sea routes—England, France and the U.S. India became independent and China turned to communism in the mid-twentieth century and both began to rebuild their economies. In the beginning of the twenty-first century, China and India have become the world's fastest growing economies and the centre of gravity of global trade appears to be shifting east again. The following pages give a glimpse of the growth trajectory of the Asian giants over 500 years.

Sixteenth Century

INDIA

As Arab traders ship Indian goods to Europe through the Red Sea and Mediterranean ports, India's economy has a 24.5 per cent share of world income. It is the world's second largest after China. India enjoys a favourable balance of trade—it earns gold and silver from the textiles, sugar, spices, indigo, carpets, etc. it sells.

CHINA

Direct maritime trade between Europe and China begins with the Portuguese, who lease an outpost at Macau in 1557. Other Europeans follow. India and China trade with each other using overland routes.

Seventeenth Century

INDIA

At the turn of the century, Mughal India's annual income is greater than the British budget. As the Mughal Empire reaches its zenith under Shah Jahan, Indian exports exceed its imports—it is selling many more things and lots more of each. Chinese ships dock at Quilon and Calicut, while in Khambat the volume of trade is so high that more than 3000 ships visit the port every year.

CHINA

China continues to control a quarter of world trade. The English establish a trading post at Canton in 1637. Trade grows further after the Qing emperor relaxes maritime trade restrictions in the 1680's. By now, Taiwan has come under Qing control. But, the sea trade makes the Chinese apprehensive of conquest.

<p>Aurangzeb's India had a 24.4 per cent share of world income, the largest in the world. But as Mughal power declines, the East India Company disrupts trade relations between India's mercantile community.</p> <p>In 1760, as China's share of global trade begins to fall, the government sets out regulations for foreigners and foreign ships. Canton is the only port open to alien traders. After their War of Independence (1776), the Americans begin to trade with China; this is a setback for the British.</p>	<p><i>Eighteenth Century</i></p> <p>INDIA</p> <p>CHINA</p>
<p>In 1820, India's economy is completely controlled by the East India Company—16 per cent of the world income. The Indian agricultural pattern is changed by the Company. By 1870, India has a 12.2 per cent share of the world income.</p> <p>The Qing king refuses to open all ports to foreign traders and seeks to restrict the opium trade with India. War breaks out twice between Britain and China. A defeated China accepts the opium trade and gives Western merchants access. Tea exports increase 500 per cent in eight years, from 1843 to 1855.</p>	<p><i>Nineteenth Century</i></p> <p>INDIA</p> <p>CHINA</p>
<p>In 1913, Indian economy had a mere 7.6 per cent share of world income. In 1952, five years after Independence, it had 3.8 per cent. Though by 1973 the economy had grown to \$494.8 billion, its share of the world income fell to 3.1 per cent. In 1991, economic liberalisation introduced and by 1998, Indian economy accounts for a five per cent share of the world income. By 2005, India's economy is \$3,815.6 billion or a 6.3 per cent share of the world income.</p> <p>Before communist China comes into being in 1949, the country mainly produces yarn, coal, crude oil, cotton and foodgrain. Mao Zedong puts the country on a socialist path. In 1980, under Deng Xiaoping, China changes track and the first Special Economic Zones are established in Shenzhen. In 1986, Deng's 'Open-door' policy encourages foreign direct investment. In 1992, Deng accelerates market reforms to establish a 'socialist market economy'. For the first time, China figures in the world's top ten economies. In 2001, it joins the WTO.</p>	<p><i>Twentieth Century</i></p> <p>INDIA</p> <p>CHINA</p>

New Professions, Old Skills: from Silversmiths to the Printing Press

By the 1860s and 1870s, the wood and metal engravers of Bat-tala had emerged as the most prominent 'artisan' community in Calcutta's art market.

Initially, traditional artisan groups like ironsmiths, coppersmiths, gold and silversmiths (the *Kansaris*, *Shankharis*, *Swarnakars* and *Karmakars*), finding employment in the new British-owned printing presses at Serampore and Calcutta, had adapted their old skills of working in metal towards preparing type-faces and engraved blocks. By the 1820s and 1830s, these print-makers became a separate community, working primarily with the wood-engraved block to suit the requirements of small-sized pictures in the cheap illustrated Bengali books.

As a result some important changes occurred in the social position and commercial prospects of the artisans who produced them. The engravers at Bat-tala had emerged from traditional artisan communities, with the skills of cutting, carving, furrowing and chipping in various metals. Some of them may even have been descendants of the artisan castes of the *sutradhars* or *shankaris* to which most of the Kalighat *patuas* belonged. But, unlike the Kalighat *patuas*, the engravers came to throw off many of their hereditary and

caste affiliations to become a new, flexible community of printers. The skills of engraving and printing became more and more open and competitive, drawing in persons from various other communities (occasionally even Brahmins) who wished to find a new vocation in this trade.

—TAPATI GUHA-THAKURTA
*The Making of New
Indian Art*

*Lead type in compositor trays;
(inset) type arranged and fixed in
a temporary frame*



COLONIAL RULE AND CRAFTS

EXERCISE

1. Imagine you are an adventurous English traveller to India in the seventeenth century. Describe the crafts you see. What would you buy to take home and why?
2. Colonialism transformed India from craft producer to a supplier of raw materials—write a short description of this change and how it affected the crafts industry in India.
3. Make a chart or an illustrated story of the history of textiles in India.
4. Industrialisation transformed craft production in England in the nineteenth century. How did it transform Indian craft production in the twentieth century?
5. Compare and contrast trade in India and China over the last 500 years. Illustrate with graphs or tables.

