



APHF

ASIA PUBLIC HISTORY
FOUNDATION

SMOKY HORIZONS
TOBACCO AND EMPIRE IN ASIA, 1850-2000

September 2020

Abstract

Few have attempted to study the introduction and spread of tobacco cultivation in Asia using an analytical frame, which integrates the imperial economy, local social structures, and the commodity history of tobacco. This is a report on preliminary archival and ethnographic work on the economic and social relationship between tobacco cultivation and imperial expansion in Asia, focusing primarily on British India (today's nation-states of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh), China, and Japan. It argues (a) that the East India Company (1813-1858) and private European companies (1860-1920) shaped the cultivation and flow of tobacco in Asia by the circulation of capital between British India and Qing China; and (b) that patterns of landholding and moneylending instituted during colonial rule remain dominant for tobacco cultivators in India today. Over a period of six months (April-October 2019), intensive archival research was conducted in London, Bristol, New Delhi, Kolkata, Beijing, Kunming, Kyoto, and Tokyo, and ethnographic interviews were conducted in Yunnan, China and Ranchi, India. Our preliminary findings detailed in this report suggest that the introduction and spread of tobacco cultivation in British India was deeply tied to the imperial economy – particularly the triangular trade on opium between Britain, India, and China. The social relations of debtor and creditor, and landlord and peasant established during British rule remain largely unchanged in the Indian subcontinent. The ethno-historical understanding provides a critical window into the present-day tobacco landscape in India and thus, to study or to transform, it is crucial that one understands the complex relationship of the state and the cultivators, and chronicles its change over time.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	4
2	Research Questions	6
3	Archives and Field Sites	6

Part I: Tobacco and Empire, 1850-1950

4	The British Empire in Asia	7
4.1	Tobacco in India	
4.2	The British in Bengal	
4.3	The “Triangular Trade” Between Britain, India, and China	
4.4	Tobacco and Empire in China	

Part II: Social Structures of Agro-Capitalism

5	Tobacco and Agrarian Society in India	26
5.1	Ethnography in Merle, Jharkhand	
5.2	Methodological Discussion	
6	Tobacco and Chinese Rural Society	31
6.1	Ethnography in Yuxi, Yunnan	
6.2	Methodological Discussion	
7	Conclusion and Directions for Further Research	35
8	Acknowledgements	36
9	Bibliography	37

1. Introduction

The complex relationship between polity and peasantry has been a subject of intrigue for academics and policy makers alike. The transition of states and the ever-changing power relations of the world have made production of goods and their subsequent circulation the pivot of diplomacy and interdependence. What you produce and how you produce defines your friends, enemies, allies, and critics. Economists and policy makers often have their hands full studying production and consumption patterns of the present trading giants, striving to predict the next decade, analyzing output, production, etc. But in every case, there is wide acceptance of the fact that predictions will remain stable only if circumstances remain foreseen and accounted for. Behind every producing and consuming economy lies a society whose practices, demands, skills, and ethos have been shaped by their sociopolitical experiences over time. It is through the understanding of these aspects that one can strive to analyze and even predict global relations that are shaped by multilateral trade of goods and services.

To understand the individual economies of Asia and how they interact with the rest of the world, it is immensely important to know and study Asia as a region with its own history, which in turn has shaped its distinct yet interconnected economies.

The importance of commodity trades in establishing the imperial economy in Asia has been extensively studied by historians. Key imperial commodities of the nineteenth century British Empire – which have been termed “classic” imperial

products by historians – include tea,¹ cotton,² sugar,³ opium,⁴ and jute.⁵ But tobacco, an imperial product that has left one of the most significant legacies of addiction in Asia, has received – at best – only a passing mention by historians of Empire. While there exist excellent case studies of tobacco cultivation and consumption – particularly in China⁶ – few have attempted to study the introduction and spread of tobacco cultivation in Asia using an analytical frame, which integrates imperial economy, local social structures, and the commodity history of tobacco.

This project proposes a new approach toward understanding the introduction and growth of tobacco cultivation in Asia. Instead of restricting the scope of investigation to tobacco companies and Euro-American consumption patterns, as many histories of tobacco tend to do,⁷ this project explores the history of tobacco in Asia as a series of social interrelations among the financial magnates of the British Empire, peasant laborers, and social intermediaries such as landowners and moneylenders. The purpose of this report is not to argue conclusive answers, but to suggest potential avenues of research along with sharing of preliminary findings in the field and the archive. This report therefore strives to understand the growth and dissemination of tobacco in Asia through a study of social relations that are closely intertwined with the life and fate of the commodity. This report outlines the research questions in a way that focuses on the underlying social relations, and draws upon archival findings not only to capture the colonial power dynamics but also to shed light on the indigenous supply chains. These archival findings are supported by

¹ Sharma, Jayeeta. 2011. *Empire's Garden: Assam and the Making of India*. Durham: Duke University Press.

² Beckert, Sven. 2014. *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*. New York: Vintage.

³ Mintz, Sidney. 1985. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin Books.

⁴ Trocki, Carl A. 1990. *Opium and Empire: Chinese Society in Colonial Singapore, 1800–1910*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

⁵ Ali, Tariq Omar. 2018. *A Local History of Global Capital: Jute and Peasant Life in the Bengal Delta*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

⁶ Benedict, Carol. 2011. *Golden Silk-Smoke: A History of Tobacco in China, 1550–2010*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁷ Brandt, Allan M. 2007. *The Cigarette Century: The Rise, Fall and Deadly Persistence of the Product that Defined America*. New York: Basic Books; Enstad, Nan. 2018. *Cigarettes, Inc.: An Intimate History of Corporate Imperialism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

ethnographic data that confirm the historical patterns of land holding and the effects that land holding have had on present day life and society. Finally, the report presents some potential ways of applying historical research to present-day problems.

2. Research Questions

Two research questions were investigated over a period of six months through archival and ethnographic research methods:

- I. What was the relationship between the nineteenth century imperial economy and the cultivation of tobacco in Asia?
- II. What kind of social structures of production – particularly between landlord, moneylender, and peasant – emerged through this imperial process in India and China, and what have been their legacies in the contemporary period?

It is pertinent to note that an understanding of the current social power dynamics within the structures of production is possible only by acknowledging the history and contribution of colonial policies to their making. The cultivation of tobacco in present day Asia is not divorced from the past; thus, to legislate, intervene, or study the present, it is crucial that one understands the relationship of the state and the cultivators, and chronicles its change over time.

3. Archives and Field Sites

The principal archival sources for this project have been government documents, published and unpublished, including the Statistics of the British Empire published from London throughout the 19th century; papers of private businesses and companies, especially the Imperial Tobacco Company and private papers of the Wills

Family; and reports and memoranda issued by regional governments in Bengal and Yunnan. These documents were held in the British Library and National Archives, London, UK; Bristol Public Library in Bristol, UK; National Archives of India, New Delhi; West Bengal State Archives, Kolkata, India; National Archives of Japan in Tokyo; and Bangladesh National Archives in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Ethnographic sources for this project included semi-structured interviews and observations carried out by trained anthropologists in Ranchi, India and Kunming, Yunnan, China. Ranchi was selected because the Jharkhand region was among the oldest tobacco-growing regions of India (although more recently, cultivation has shifted more to the Deccan), and Yunnan remains China's principal tobacco-growing region.

Part I: Tobacco and Empire, 1850-1950

4. The British Empire in Asia

Any attempt to understand colonial trade relations in Asia is incomplete without a reference to the English East India Company. The presence of the English East India Company (EEIC) in the region dates back to the early sixteenth century, but their first territorial conquest was the 1757 Battle of Plassey, when Robert Clive defeated Siraj-ud-daulah, the Nawab of Bengal. In 1765, after the Battle of Buxar, the EEIC forced the Mughal Emperor to grant them the diwani (right to collect revenue) in the entire province of Bengal. The period of about 190 years between the Battle of Plassey in 1757 and India's independence in 1947 has been divided by historians into four major periods, depending on the mode of the imperial economy (the periodization is based on Indian history because India, and not China, was formally colonized).

1757-1813

Mercantilist Phase

The main source of colonial income was land revenue from Bengal, and later Bombay (Mumbai) and Madras (Chennai).

1813-1858

Empire of Free Trade

The Charter Act of 1813 took away EEIC's monopoly over trade in the East (except in opium). It was in this period that British businessmen and capitalists could trade with India and China, and the "triangular trade" between Britain, India, and China was set up. The export surplus of India was the main source of revenue. The Opium Wars were fought during this period.

1858-1914

High Noon of Imperial Capitalism

In 1858, the EEIC was abolished⁸ and India became a colony administered directly by the British Crown. British investors set up plantations and mines throughout South and Southeast Asia, and this capitalist investment became the key source of revenue during this period.

1914-1947

Late Colonialism

After the First World War, revenues from India continued to decline, through the depression, the Bengal Famine, and the Second World War, to the extent that the colony was no longer profitable by the late 1940s. Indian businessmen started buying up British businesses from the 1930s.⁹

The principal expansion of the tobacco trade in India and China started during the Empire of Free Trade (1813-1858) and reached its zenith during the High Noon of

⁸ The EEIC was abolished after the Revolt of 1857, after which India had become a colony under the British Crown.

⁹ For more on this periodization, see Bayly, C.A. 1989. *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 88-121.

Imperial Capitalism (1858-1914). This report will mostly focus on this period (1858-1914), particularly the economic entanglement known as the “triangular trade.”¹⁰ But before we analyze the economics of the triangular trade, it is important to take a brief look at the history of tobacco in precolonial India because the British could establish their nineteenth-century tobacco trade only through these older trade channels.

4.1 Tobacco in India

It was the sixteenth-century Indian Ocean trade,¹¹ dominated by the Portuguese, which introduced tobacco to both India and China.¹² Tobacco traveled to mainland China by merchants who traveled between Fujian and the Philippines; in India, the Portuguese, who were active in the Bay of Bengal between Chittagong and the Malacca, introduced the crop.¹³ That tobacco became a prized commodity is shown in the Bengali epic poems of the sixteenth century, particularly the Chandimangal by Mukundaram, which depicts the merchant Dhanapati traveling to Ceylon (Sinhala) with several merchandise:

Gold bangles, silver plates, tobacco

Cardamom, Betelnut and silk robes.¹⁴

That tobacco ranks among gold and silver suggests its importance as a luxury good rather than a mass-market commodity. While tobacco was not used in upper-caste Hindu rituals as extensively as it was among the American Indian tribes, many shamanistic tribal deities in India – especially in Bengal and Orissa – were given

¹⁰ See Sen, Tansen. 2017. *India, China, and the World: A Connected History*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.

¹¹ Indian Ocean Trade here refers to trade between the Arabian Peninsula, India, China, and the East Coast of Africa. See Das Gupta, Ashin. 2001. *The World of the Indian Ocean Merchant, 1500–1800*. New York: Oxford University Press.

¹² Benedict, *Golden Silk-Smoke*.

¹³ Subrahmanyam, Sanjay. 1990. *The Political Economy of Commerce: Southern India 1500 to 1650*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁴ Mukundaram. 1996. *Kabikāṅkṛā Chandi*. Kolkata: Ananda Publishers.

tobacco and alcohol as sacred offerings.¹⁵ The ritual use of tobacco became more widespread in Southeast Asia over the nineteenth century: as the historian Anthony Reid noted, tobacco rapidly substituted betel leaves as gifts to guests or spirits.¹⁶

In 1600, however, no tobacco seems to have been grown in India: it was mostly imported by the Portuguese.¹⁷ However, within a mere decade or so, tobacco smoking had become so widespread that the Mughal Emperor Jahangir had to issue a decree in 1617 to forbid smoking.¹⁸ This added popularity was due to pilgrims from Mecca, who had brought the novelty from the Ottoman realms. By 1622, the Coromandel coast of India (between Tamil Nadu and Orissa) was growing enough tobacco to export it to the Red Sea-Persian Gulf area and to coastal Burma (present-day Myanmar).¹⁹ To put this into perspective, the commercial farming of tobacco in Virginia began only in 1616.²⁰ The cultivation of tobacco in India, therefore, is as old as its commercial cultivation in British Virginia.

In other words, tobacco has been linked to the Indian Ocean trade²¹ since its inception in India. It was grown mostly around the coasts, and while the bulk of production took place in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat, Portuguese travel accounts note the cultivation of tobacco in Bengal in the east for consumption in Arakan in central Burma.²² In Andhra Pradesh, tobacco was sent to the port of Masulipatnam and exported to Java, Aceh, and other parts of Sumatra in Indonesia. The trade was lucrative enough for the Mughal emperors to have imposed a tobacco tax and the early English merchants to begin buying and exporting tobacco in western and southeastern

¹⁵ Ferrari, Fabrizio M. 2011. *Health and Religious Rituals in South Asia: Disease, Possession and Healing*. London: Routledge; 138.

¹⁶ Reid, Anthony. 2015. *A History of Southeast Asia: Critical Crossroads*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell; 284.

¹⁷ Gokhale, B.G. 1974. "Tobacco in Seventeenth-Century India." *Agricultural History* 48, no. 4:484-492.

¹⁸ Gokhale, "Tobacco in Seventeenth-Century India," 487.

¹⁹ Observation by the English East India Company's agent William Methwold, compiled in Moreland M.H, ed. 1931. *Relations of Golkonda in the Early Seventeenth Century*. London: Hakluyt Society; 36.

²⁰ Gokhale, "Tobacco in Seventeenth-Century India," 490.

²¹ This trade covered India, China, the Arabian Peninsula, and the coast of Africa.

²² Moreland, *Relations of Golkonda*, 38-39.

India. The amount of these exports ranged from a bale to about 150 maunds (100 maund equals 1.63 metric tons). In western India, the port of Surat was the pivot to export tobacco into the Arabian Sea, particularly Thatta in Sind, Goa, the Konkan Coast, and the island of Diu. From these ports the tobacco was exported to the Persian Gulf and possibly to Arabia.

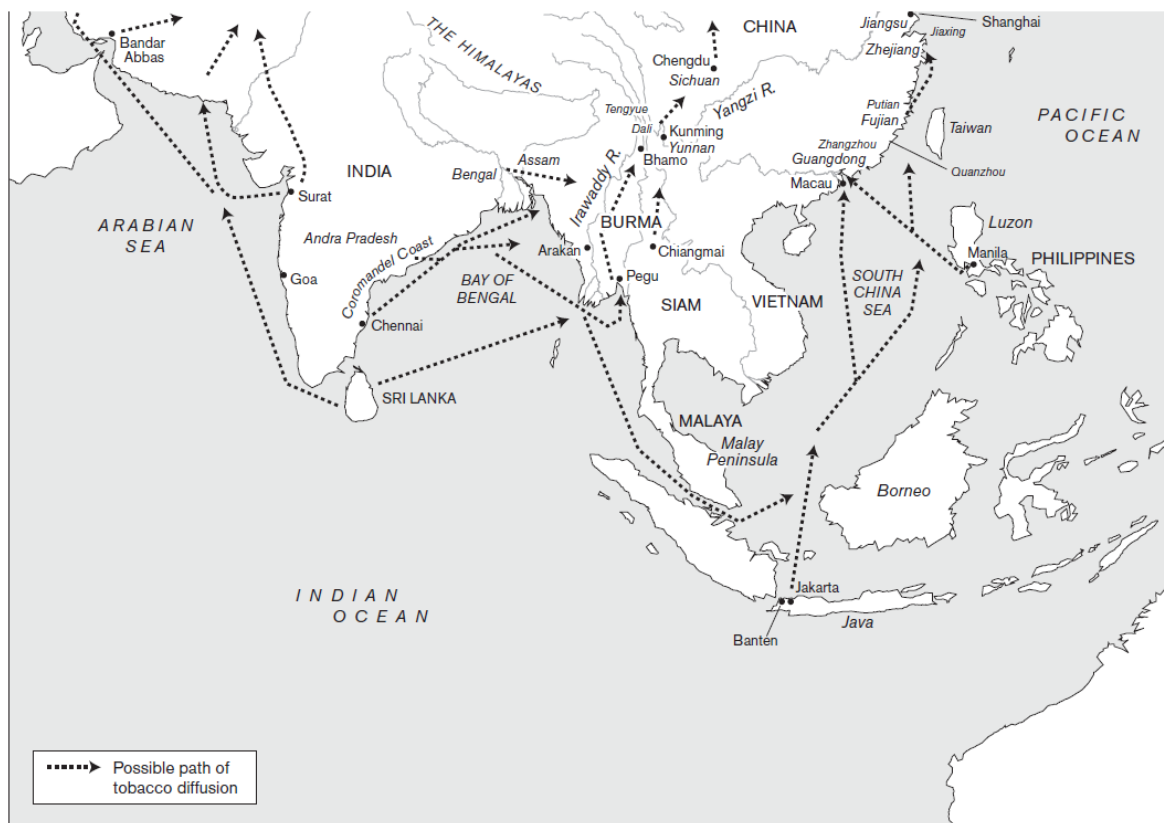
Even before the arrival of the British, therefore, there existed two clear oceanic trade routes of tobacco from the Indian peninsula:

1. **The Eastern Route** from Masulipatnam (controlled by Golconda), across the Bay of Bengal to coastal Burma, Malacca, Java, Aceh, and other parts of Sumatra.
2. **The Western Route** from Surat (initially a Mughal port, later a British factory), across the Arabian Sea to Thatta, Diu, Konkan, and Goa, and then onward to the Persian Gulf.

The establishment of these two routes is significant, because it was these routes that would later be used by the EEIC to peddle opium and tobacco in the Indian Ocean arena.

Our emphasis in this report is on the cultivation of tobacco as a crop in India, rather than the manufacture of consumer products like bidis or cigarettes. Despite being one of the largest producers of tobacco in the world, India continues to rely on human labor for most of the production process. Unlike its Chinese counterpart, even in the twenty-first century, India continues to resist mechanization. The question of why the Indian tobacco sector resists mechanization has been raised many times by corporate entities and researchers alike. The answer to this question, unlike others in the policy arena, lies in the country's colonial past. In part, this resistance has to do with the colonial nature of the relationship between India and London, unlike the situation in China. The colonial state discouraged private investment in India, mainly

because they wanted to encourage investors and manufacturers in England.²³ This is why the production of tobacco in India remained largely agrarian – like other crops such as jute, opium, or indigo. While a few cigarette factories were opened in the early 20th century, much of the tobacco was either shipped away or consumed locally as bidis. The continuation of these colonial patterns of land/moneylending relations (as we show in the ethnographic interviews) still impedes the development of mechanized sectors, the price of which is often paid by the labor market in India. Our analysis of the colonial production of tobacco, therefore, focuses primarily on the agrarian sector.



MAP 1. Introduction of tobacco into Chinese borderlands, ca. 1550–1650.

Source: Benedict, Carol. 2011. *Golden Silk-Smoke: A History of Tobacco in China, 1550–2010*. Berkeley: University of California Press, page 17.

²³ See Bagchi, Amiya Kumar. 1972. *Private Investment in India 1900–1939*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

4.2. *The British in Bengal*

The English East India Company threw itself into the tobacco trade after having received the diwani (right to collect revenue) in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1765.²⁴ Upon annexing the zamindari (estate) of Midnapore in the western frontier of Bengal – one of the three large estates annexed by the EEIC in 1760 – the first tobacco in British Bengal started to be grown there.²⁵ Bengal was an unusual choice: It had never been a major site of tobacco cultivation (although the crop had been cultivated in certain corners since the early 1600s) and the soil was not particularly suited for the crop. Yet the Company chose to experiment with tobacco in the first region it had annexed – and by the 1920s, Bengal would have the largest tobacco farms in the whole country (see Table 1).

TABLE ONE **Area Under Cultivation in British India, 1921**

Province	Area (in 1,000 hectares)
Bengal	120.6
Berar	47.9
Madras	82.2
Bombay	48.6
Oudh	36.2
Punjab	36.4
Burma	34.9
NWFP	3.6
Others	14.7
Total	425.1
Source: <i>Statistical Abstracts of British India</i> (London, 1921).	

²⁴ Bose, Sugata, and Jalal, Ayesha. 2018. *Modern South Asia*. 4th ed. London: Routledge.

²⁵ *Proceedings of the Tobacco Board*. West Bengal State Archives F11/213/Files 45–78.

In those early years, the Company forbade private trade in India (with limited success)²⁶ and sent its own officials to commission and supervise tobacco cultivation in Midnapore.

One revenue officer of the Company, William Lawson Carstairs, was among the pioneers of tobacco cultivation in British-occupied land. Carstairs went to Midnapore in 1770 to supervise the cultivation of tobacco in the region and found that the crop had been cultivated in several villages around Jhargram in Midnapore district. “The yield per peasant is not yet satisfactory,” he commented, “but that is mostly due to the periodic incursions of nomadic bands from central India, leading the peasants to frequently abandon the village.” He expressed hope, however, that tobacco would be useful as a commercial crop in the region.²⁷

It was Carstairs who had first envisioned the possibility of export of the crop to China. In 1793, he solicited Cornwallis, the Governor General, to include the matter in the Macartney Embassy to China, the first English diplomatic mission to be granted an audience with the Qing Emperor – which turned out to be an utter diplomatic failure. The same year in Bengal, however, saw the establishment of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal, which resulted in the fixation of revenue collection rights in the hands of Indian landlords. As a result, Carstairs was called back and the next ten years or so did not see appreciable change in the tobacco policy in British India.²⁸

The situation changed dramatically in 1813, when the Charter Act took off the EEIC’s monopoly of trading in the East and allowed private British traders to venture into trading between India and China. The new act caused a number of changes in India’s agrarian landscape, particularly in the beginning of large-scale cultivation of jute and indigo. The most important and far-reaching consequence, however, was the

²⁶ The company had little control over the countless private traders who went all about the country. See Bayly, C.A. 1983. *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

²⁷ Papers of Carstairs, William Lawson (1763–1772). West Bengal State Archives (henceforth WBSA), Kolkata, India, N111/56.7/ File 3.

²⁸ Carstairs Papers, WBSA, File 5.

beginning of a trade network that linked India, China and London. It was the financial gains around this trade that allowed the development of the tobacco industry in Asia.

4.3 The “Triangular Trade” Between Britain, India, and China

The mechanism known as the triangular trade has its origins in the trade relations between England and China. English merchants had coveted luxury goods like silk and porcelain and, above all, tea from China. This trade had begun in the seventeenth century, but really increased during the eighteenth century, when tea became popular as a drink in England. The Company had to pay the Chinese in silver, because China, hungry for silver, refused any other form of payment. This process raised an outcry over the drain of silver in England – a fear that resonated with mercantilist economic theories of the eighteenth century, which touted that the amount of silver in a country determined its economic power.²⁹

To combat this drain of silver, the EEIC devised an ingenious mechanism in which opium grown in India would be sold to China in exchange for tea. The EEIC set up opium factories in India, including the state-run factories in Bihar and the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh, and cultivated opium in the Malwa plateau (present-day Madhya Pradesh). This highly addictive drug was introduced into Canton (Hong Kong) amidst much opposition from the Qing governor there, but the trade channel proved entirely profitable. Singapore, established as a port in 1819, became the hub of these opium channels from India and China.³⁰ The EEIC received state backing in this endeavor, and the British state showed that it would not hesitate even to go to war with the Chinese (1839) to protect its opium trade. There is therefore some justification in

²⁹ Sen, *India, China, and the World*, Chapter 3.

³⁰ Singapore was the most important hub of the opium trade. See Trocki, *Opium and Empire*, 44–72.

historian Carl Trocki's comment that the English East India Company was the "largest drug dealer East of Suez."³¹

The routes of this opium trade in Asia included two routes:

1. **The Eastern Route:** opium produced in Bihar and Eastern UP, brought to Calcutta and then taken across the Bay of Bengal to Canton via Singapore and Sumatra. In 1839, this "Bengal opium" export to China amounted to 18,965 chests.
2. **The Western Route:** opium grown in Malwa and Sind (Thatta), brought to Bombay and then sailed across to Canton. This "Malwa opium" was grown mostly by private Indian and European businessmen and amounted to 1,654 chests in 1839 – less than one-tenth of the Bengal opium.³²

Comparing these two routes with the two seventeenth-century tobacco trade routes in India described in section 4.1 shows that much of the regions and routes involved in previously shipping tobacco were now dealing with opium. This spatial commonality establishes that trade routes and intermediary traders of both opium and tobacco had several overlapping spaces, that opium and tobacco were transported along the same routes in Asia.

While the economics of the triangular trade and how it helped Britain to save silver is a story well known among historians, it is less known that the trade in opium and tobacco went hand in hand; indeed, in many cases, the same traders dealt in both products. The three British merchant firms based in Canton – Jardine, Matheson & Co, Russell & Co, and Dent & Co – were all involved in the smuggling of tobacco side-by-side with the chests of opium. The secret files of the opium department in Calcutta (now housed in the West Bengal State Archives at Bhabani Datta Road, Kolkata) are

³¹ Trocki, *Opium and Empire*, 93.

³² Fay, Peter Ward. 1974. *The Opium War 1840-1842*. Durham, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

replete with papers that reflect the intimate connections between opium and tobacco in the triangular trade.

For instance, in March 1831, Oliver Murphey, a clerk based in the Dent & Co at Canton, acknowledged the receipt of 167 chests of tobacco from Bengal, and requisitioned for several more. “Tobacco has found an increasing circle of consumers here,” Murphey reported, “especially since government regulations are not so high as in the case for opium.”³³ In September 1831, six months later, Murphey received a shipment of 310 chests – close to double the previous shipment – and reported that the crop was still “in high demand.”³⁴ Similarly, an official of Jardine Matheson received a shipment of 126 chests along with a large shipment of opium; his letter suggested that Parsi merchants of Bombay, especially Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, had been influential in redirecting the tobacco crop of Gujarat through Bombay toward Canton.³⁵ The enthusiasm of the Canton firms for tobacco suggests that as early as the 1830s, the possibility of using tobacco as a counter to opium in this transcontinental trade was being seriously considered by businessmen. With the increasingly stringent control against opium, the EEIC found a safer alternative with tobacco – an addictive drug that did not show its effects as openly as opium did.

If private firms were enthusiastic about tobacco, the EEIC was only too eager to profit from them. An 1833 note from the opium department in Calcutta urges the district collectors of Midnapore and Ranchi to “survey, assess and settle land with possibility for tobacco production.”³⁶ Another reason for preferring Bengal to other parts of India was precisely its proximity to opium fields: the two crops, if grown close by, would reduce transportation costs to the ports. Hence opium from Ghazipur and Muzaffarpur was coupled with tobacco grown in Midnapore, while Malwa opium was packed with

³³ Murphy to Board, Jardine Matheson Papers, National Archives of India (henceforth NAI) 546.986/ March 1831/ File 21.

³⁴ Murphy to Board, Jardine Matheson Papers, NAI 546.992/ September 1831/ File 3.

³⁵ Jardine Matheson Correspondence, British Library London, MSS EUR F112/ 657.

³⁶ Opium Department papers, NAI 784.67/ File 5.

tobacco from Gujarat. The two went hand in hand, and served the same economic purpose of protecting England's silver against Chinese tea.³⁷

As context, this was a time when China did not produce enough tobacco on its own. The earliest reliable statistics available, from 1850, show the area under cultivation for tobacco much lower than other cash crops:

TABLE TWO **Cash Crop Cultivation Area in the Qing Empire, 1850**

Crop	Area (million <i>mu</i>)	Proportion of cash crop total (%)
Cotton	186.3	21.36
Hemp	10.85	5.82
Mulberry	3.00	1.61
Tea	6.00	3.22
Sugarcane	4.50	2.42
Tobacco	3.26	1.75
Others	118.9	63.82

Source: Shi, Zhihong. 2017. *Agricultural Development in Qing China: A Quantitative Study, 1661–1911*. Leiden: Brill, page 136.

The proportion of tobacco in cash crop total was at 1.75%, less than one-third of hemp (at 5.82%), suggesting that hemp-smoking, like in India, was traditionally more common than tobacco there. However, such meager amounts of tobacco production does not match with reports of increasing tobacco consumption in China during this period, which possibly hints that they were importing tobacco from India.³⁸ Further research is needed to precisely tally simultaneous statistics of British India and China in the 1850s. As of now, the only reliable statistics we have from British India dates from 1880s. The statistics between 1880s and 1920s are as follows:

³⁷ Opium Department papers, NAI 784.67/ File 5.

³⁸ See Benedict, *Golden Sea-Smoke*, Chapter 3.

TABLE THREE **Tobacco Production in British India, 1881–1922**

Years	Exports (million Rs.)	Imports (million Rs.)
1881–1882	1.197	0.632
1891–1892	1.414	1.671
1912–1913	3.836	6.939
1920–1921	7.492	25.591
1921–1922	7.131	16.506

Source: *Statistical Abstracts of British India*, published 1881 onwards.

Analyzing the figures in Table 3, we note exports dwindling with respect to imports from the 1890s. The most important reason behind this drop is the increase in tobacco cultivation within China during this period. From its meager beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century, China grew to be one of the largest producers of tobacco by the 1930s, second only to the United States and British India. The project of introducing tobacco to China was as successful as introducing opium: by the twentieth century, China produced industrial quantities of both crops itself.



Fig. 1: The Union Jack on Indian Cigarette Advertisements, 1890.

Courtesy New York Public Library.

Figure 1 shows the presence of British imperialism in commodity packaging in the colonial market. Cigarettes in circulation proudly bore imagery glorifying the Crown and the British Empire leaving no doubts in the minds of the consumer regarding the controller of the commodity irrespective of its origin.

TABLE FOUR World Tobacco Production, 1938

Country	Production (in 1,000 tons)
United States	628.7
British India	499.0
China	446.8
USSR	270.3
Brazil	95.1
Total	2,797.3



Fig 2: Wills Cigarette's "Tribute to India," 1911.

Courtesy New York Public Library.

The tobacco industry has historically been an avid practitioner of marketing and commercial endorsement. The manufacturers are quick to reflect colonial desires or State sentiments in their packaging, thus giving the commodity an impressive appeal. Figure 2 paints an exotic image of India in line with the Orientalist impression, referring to India as the almost mythical land of grandeur and Oriental monarchy.

4.4 Tobacco and Empire in China

Tobacco was introduced in China around the same time as in India, and through similar networks of Oceanic trade mediated by the Portuguese. It is well possible that the crop was introduced into Yunnan from Burma – the two regions had been thickly connected by trade routes, and the Burmese coast received tobacco from Indian ships. Already in the late seventeenth century, gazetteers of the Qing dynasty (1644-1912) noted that districts in western Yunnan had been growing tobacco since the late Ming era (1630-1645). This connection may well have been possible through the sea or through land routes across Bengal and Assam. Along with Yunnan, there was another possible route from the north, from the steppes through Kashgar and Yarkand into the province of Gansu, which became known for its “yellow-flower

tobacco” (huanghua yan).³⁹ Through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it slowly spread through the upland valleys along the Yangtze and in Yunnan. By the nineteenth century, Yunnan had become China’s most important tobacco-growing region. Chinese consumption of tobacco was not only through smoking but through the use of snuff (snorted through the nose); John Francis Davis, a clerk who later became governor of Hong Kong, reminisced in 1813 that he seldom saw a Chinese merchant without his snuff bottle. The commodity that took England by storm in the 1600s had invaded China too. It was naturally of little surprise to know that much of the tobacco consumed in China was imported from British India, and, in some case, the United States (1780-1820).⁴⁰

Chinese tobacco production really took a boost in the 1880s, when multinational cigarette companies began setting up the cigarette industry in China. The pioneer in this regard was the W.D. and H.O. Wills firm based in Bristol, in conjunction with James Duke, head of the American Tobacco Company, who started selling cigarettes in China in the 1880s through their agent in Shanghai, Rex and Co. The British and the Americans were joined by the Japanese Murai Brothers Tobacco Company of Kyoto (in 1897) and the Russian firm Lopato and Sons (1898).⁴¹ This competitive business environment in China somewhat reflected how the global imperialist powers regarded China as a potential “rich prize” to be carved up among spheres of influence. In other words, the boost in tobacco production of China was the product of a new imperial age in the world, a more aggressive variety of imperialism than the Empire of Free Trade of the 1840s and 1850s.

³⁹ Benedict, *Golden Silk-Smoke*, 28.

⁴⁰ Papers of John Francis Davis, The British Library, MSS Eur F345/78.

⁴¹ To the best of our knowledge, Wills is the only Company that is active today.

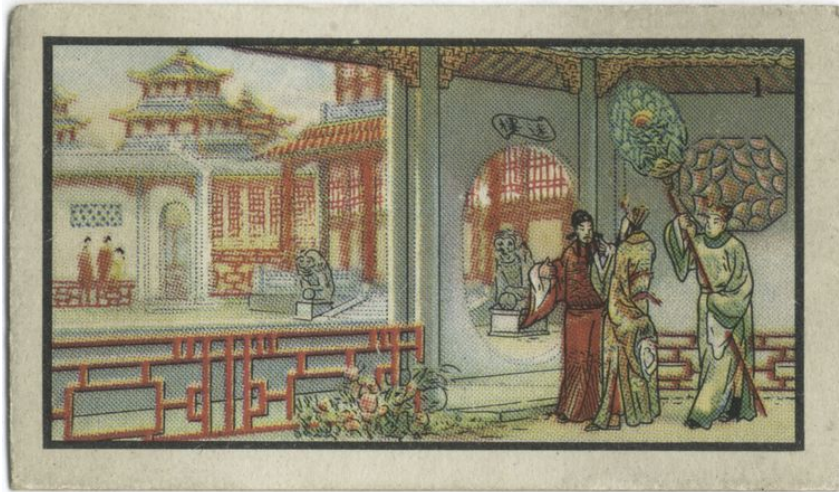


Fig 3: Chinese Cigarette Card, British American Tobacco Company, 1910.

Courtesy New York Public Library.

The history of the W.D. and H.O. Wills firm is a representative example of the changes that this new empire brought to the global tobacco industry. The firm was in fact quite old – dating to 1796 – but it was only in the 1860s that it began to grow suddenly, due in no small part to the possibility of business in different parts of the Empire. Quite apart from the popularity of its legendary brands – Bristol, Capstan, and Gold Flake – it was the protection offered by imperial markets that allowed them to flourish in India, Canada, and Australia (which Henry Herbert Wills visited in 1900) and then garner enough capital to expand to China. The opportunity was not lost: in 1901, 13 British companies merged with the American Tobacco Company to form the Imperial Tobacco Company, which included seven directors from the Wills family.⁴²

The papers of the Wills Family, preserved in the Wills archives in Bristol, contain enough evidence about how structures of imperial capitalism helped private businesses to expand and thrive. A series of correspondences in 1888 between directors of the company and the office of colonial secretary in London reveal a constant push to negotiate tariff barriers and declare tobacco as a commodity with imperial preference – meaning that tobacco grown within the empire would be

⁴² Cochran, Sherman. 1980. *Big Business in China: Sino-Foreign Rivalry in the Cigarette Industry, 1890-1930*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

preferred for purchase over tobacco grown elsewhere (mainly the United States).⁴³ A 1900 letter from Herbert Wills himself notes that profit from sales in India had been sufficient to invest in China, and instructs their Indian branch to begin communicating with Rex and Co. in Shanghai to rent a further 1,000 acres for cultivation in Yunnan.⁴⁴ This clearly shows that the histories of tobacco in India and China were interconnected well into the twentieth century.

The archives of the Murai Brothers company in Kyoto contain further evidence on how these international conglomerates cooperated with one another in the sphere of the tobacco business. A July 1898 correspondence between officials of the Murai Brothers and the Wills Companies suggests that these two corporations were in the process of dividing up their spheres of operation in China: while Wills wanted to keep the area around Shanghai, the Murai brothers wanted to expand further north into Manchuria.⁴⁵ Murai also expressed discontent at the Chinese nationalist response to the boycott of foreign cigarettes and the call to produce China's own cigarette factories.⁴⁶ This record reveals that even seemingly rival corporations were not always at odds with one another, especially when broader, collective research interests were involved. This phenomenon marks an important feature of modern international trade and economic relations, as governments often find themselves cornered by synchronized and measured responses and policy stands by seemingly competitive corporations. Due largely to the impetus provided by these corporations, along with several Chinese collaborators, by the 1920s, China, which had been a tobacco-importing country for much of the nineteenth century, had itself become one of the largest producers of tobacco in the world.

In sum, then, it appears that the flows of capital through European colonial empires over the nineteenth century connected the development of the tobacco trade

⁴³ Amherst to Chamberlain, Wills Papers, Bristol Public Library, File 267/5.

⁴⁴ Wills Papers, Bristol Public Library, File 120/7.

⁴⁵ Murai Brothers Archives, Private Collection, Kyoto, Japan, File 85.

⁴⁶ Murai Archives, File 72.

in both India and China. While between 1813 and 1858, this trade was mainly handled by the East India Company, from the 1860s to the 1920s, the same networks were taken up by private companies from Europe and the United States. Having understood the broader processes of trade and capital, we will now turn to the social structures in India and China that made it possible to sustain this trade.

TABLE FIVE **Import and Export of Tobacco in China**⁴⁷

Calendar Year	Imports (lb)	Exports (lb)
Average 1909–1913	15,113,000	25,487,000
1921	29,504,133	38,954,045
1922	33,871,067	48,312,764
1923	42,041,600	67,632,400

Source: U.S. Government Report, *Foreign Crops and Markets* (1926).

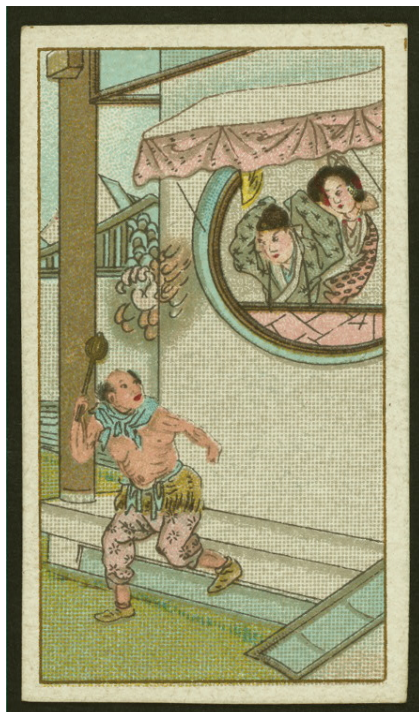


Fig. 4: Cigarette cards by the Murai brothers – this Peacock Brand was the particular one sold in Shanghai.

Courtesy New York Public Library.

⁴⁷ The author has kept the historical units when quoting directly from sources.

Part II: Social Structures of Agro-Capitalism

What are the legacies of colonial policies in present-day productions of tobacco in India and China? What have been some of the inheritances of colonial state and society in the way current social relations exist among peasants, moneylenders, and landlords in tobacco-growing regions? These are, of course, broad questions that cannot be answered fully without rigorous, multi-sited field research. In the remainder of this report, we share details of preliminary surveys of current social relations in two sites in India and China. The interviews are not meant to be exhaustive case studies of the two regions; they are simply meant to demonstrate how the historical questions discussed in Part I continue to be relevant in the everyday life of tobacco cultivators in Asia.

5. Tobacco and Agrarian Society in India

It is important to understand the social conditions in India's villages that have enabled the cultivation of tobacco by British, and later Indian capitalists. It is these very social conditions that continue to determine the post-colonial state's outlook on tobacco regulations and the industry in general. The social structures and landholding patterns in India were significantly different from the way tobacco was grown, for instance, in Virginia. Tobacco in North America tended to be grown in large plantations, while tobacco in India was grown in small landholdings. The lack of plantations in India allowed European capitalists to operate a capitalist enterprise even with non-capitalist modes of production (involving, for instance, debt traps for peasants rather than wage labor).⁴⁸

It is important to distinguish three patterns of agrarian landholdings in nineteenth century South and Southeast Asia:

⁴⁸ Bose, Sugata. 1993. *Peasant Labor and Colonial Capital*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- First, in the regions that had been cultivated for centuries, mostly ancient river floodplains and deltas like the Indo-Gangetic plain or the Kaveri delta, landholdings would be small. Cash crops grown in such landholdings included jute, indigo, sugarcane, cotton, and tobacco.⁴⁹
- Second, from the 1850s onwards, European private capital bought up large plots of land to establish plantations and mines, which worked like industrial complexes on wage labor (often migrants). This included tea in Assam and Ceylon, and rubber and tin in Malaya.
- Finally, from the 1870s, new agrarian frontiers to grow rice commercially were opened in the Irrawaddy delta in Burma, the Chao Phraya delta in Thailand, and the Mekong delta in Vietnam. These were also small landholdings funded mostly by Indian and Chinese capitalists and meant to produce rice to feed the plantation workers.⁵⁰

In this scenario, tobacco found a place in the first style of landholding – owned by small peasant families.⁵¹ The British pioneered this approach in Midnapore from the 1770s, and later spread to other regions of Bengal in the nineteenth century. There were two reasons why the British preferred this model. First, because these were family landholdings, the labor of women and children were available for free, which reduced the production costs. Second, relations with the village moneylenders played a crucial role in financing the crop. These reasons show why the Company, and later private capitalists, chose to grow tobacco using smallholders rather than plantation owners. To better understand the situation, ethnographic research was conducted in Merle village in Ranchi, Jharkhand, India in October 2019.

⁴⁹ Bose, *Peasant Labor*, 44–86. “Small” here must be understood in opposition to “plantations.”

⁵⁰ Baker, Christopher. 1981. “Economic Reorganization and the Slump in South and Southeast Asia.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, no. 3: 325–349.

⁵¹ Carstairs Papers, WBSA, File 22. “Peasant” and “cultivator” are used interchangeably, meaning anyone who labors in the field; “farmer” sometimes denotes land ownership, hence we have avoided this term.

5.1. Ethnography in Merle, Jharkhand

We interviewed 20 peasant families who worked in tobacco fields in Merle, Jharkhand in October 2019, who grew *tendu* leaves for local *bidis* as well as finer tobacco that was packaged and transported. Only three of the twenty families owned the land they cultivated; the rest were either day laborers or sharecroppers in the area. The peasants all hailed from indigenous tribes of the Chota Nagpur Plateau, especially Santhals and Mundas.

What follows is the interview transcript of Sita Munda (name changed for confidentiality reasons), a woman of 28 with one son, whose account seemed precise and was shared by many others in the group.

Interview of Sita Munda, 28, F, in Merle, Jharkhand, on 18 October 2019 [in Hindi]

Q. Do you own the land you cultivate in?

Sita Munda [SM]: No, it is owned by a richer Munda family. We get a share of the harvest.

Q. How much land do you cultivate?

SM: About 2 *bighas* [0.8 acre].

Q. How do you get money need to buy fertilizers and seeds?

SM: We borrow it from the moneylender in the village. He is a Marwari [from Western India] and he charges 15% interest per year. We are generally able to repay him after the harvest. We buy potash from Ranchi and apply natural manure from other places, too.

Q. Who works in the family?

SM: My ten-year-old son and I assist my husband, especially during the harvest season of *tendu* leaves in January and February.

Q. Do you get paid for that?

SM [laughs]: No, but my husband gets the money and that is how the household runs.

Q. Are you aware of the government program to shift land from tobacco to other crops?

SM: No.

Q. Why don't you grow crops other than tobacco?

SM. No other profitable cash crop grows here – the soil is not suitable for food crops. Tobacco is very profitable. We will otherwise not be able to pay our moneylenders back.

Q. Is the tobacco you grow consumed locally?

SM. A very small part. The *tendu* leaves go to West Bengal where they are tied into *bidis*. The high-quality tobacco we grow during the summer (mostly flue-cured Virginia Gold) is bought by companies of the ITC in Kolkata. Not much is locally consumed.

This very small interview snippet is in fact very revealing, because it shows the culmination of many processes that had started in the colonial period. These include:

- a) The small size of landholdings – as opposed to large plantations – as a preference since colonial times to reduce labor costs.
- b) The role of the moneylender and the question of indebtedness: it is important to note that the moneylender is from a different, non-local community (unlike the landowner, who is rich but indigenous), and this difference causes social tensions. This link with the moneylender was mentioned in all 20 interviews conducted in the Merle village. This relationship with moneylenders has been a feature since the late 19th century, and is worth keeping in mind for assessing socio-economic impacts while shifting to alternatives.⁵²

⁵² Baker, "Economic Reorganization."

- c) The unpaid labor of women and children that keeps down production costs, another important factor to consider for switching to alternatives.

The above-mentioned factors echo concerns and agendas of East India Company officials since the 1770s. It is small wonder that the Indian government's much-touted agenda of moving land away from tobacco cultivation has faced many obstacles, because structures of agro-capitalism that had been in place since the colonial period continue in many peasant societies in India, since upsetting these structures has social as well as economic implications. Colonial practices have solidified over the years and merged with deep-seated social structures, which in turn determine labor and social dynamics in the agrarian society. A state-orchestrated attempt to upset these structures will induce a domino effect that will not only reflect in outcomes of electoral politics but also have grave social outcomes. More research is needed on the precise continuities in landholding and debt patterns since colonial rule.

5.1. Methodological Discussion

Because we have used SM's interview as a representative sample of 20 interviews (10 men, 10 women), we provide here some more data to put these observations in context.

- 18 out of the 20 people interviewed said that they cultivated 2 *bighas* or less; 2 cultivated 3-4 *bighas*. None more than 4 *bighas*.
- 20 out of the 20 did not own the land they cultivated. [Here, we recognize that this point needs to be interpreted with caution, because there are many complex forms of land ownership in India. We simply mean that none of the peasants had the legal title to the land (i.e., right to sell the land), while they may have had some kind of possessory right.]

- 20 out of the 20 took loans from the same moneylender. (This would be different in other parts of Ranchi district, which have farmer's cooperatives/ government aid.)
- Of the 10 women interviewed, all 10 said that they were not paid. Had this labor been paid for, it is safe to assume that the price of tobacco here would have arisen considerably.⁵³

6. Tobacco and Chinese Rural Society

The pattern of tobacco cultivation in China, especially as it had expanded since the nineteenth century, shows some marked differences from the way rural social structures around tobacco have developed in India. While the pattern of landholding in tobacco-growing regions of Qing and Republican-era China is comparable to the pattern outlined above in British India, the People's Republic of China after 1949 established a radical land reform regime, with consolidated landholding and collective farming. Thus, if one were to study the current Chinese tobacco market, one would find a stark departure from the Qing and Republican-era model, not only in terms of tangible patterns but also in terms of social and economic outlooks. Table 6 below gives a sense of the average increase in tobacco production since 1970.

TABLE SIX Average Tobacco Production in the People's Republic of China *per annum*, 1970–1999

Year	Area Harvested (ha)	Average Yield (kg/ha)	Production (tons)
1970–1978	555,500	1,796	964,750
1979–1992	1,220,714	1,743	2,105,928
1993–1999	1,745,107	1,663	2,921,714

Source: FAO Statistics (<http://www.fao.org/3/y4997e/y4997eog.htm>).

⁵³ See Bose, *Peasant Labor*, for how the price of jute was kept low in colonial Bengal by not paying women and children.

It is noteworthy that the increase in tobacco production has happened mostly because more land has been brought under cultivation; the average yield per hectare has in fact *decreased* slightly. Tobacco production also brings a massive revenue to the Chinese state: In 2017, the tax revenue generated by China National Tobacco Corporation (CNTC) was approximately 1.1 trillion yuan (about USD \$160 billion), or more than 6% of the state's total tax revenue. CNTC generates more than 80% of its tax revenue for the government.⁵⁴

6.1 *Ethnography in Yuxi, Yunnan*

Yunnan is tobacco's largest tobacco-producing region, and we conducted 15 ethnographic interviews in Yuxi, a municipality in Yunnan, the location of the cigarette manufacturer, Hongta Group. What follows is the interview of Lu Han (name changed for confidentiality reasons), male, 30. The interviews in Yunnan were mostly conducted with an eye for comparative insights with India.

Interview of Interview of Lu Han, 26, M, at Yuxi, on 9 August 2019 [in Mandarin]⁵⁵

Q. What stage of tobacco cultivation are you in currently?

Lu Han [LH]: We are in the process of harvesting tobacco now. We have just cut off the flower from on top of the plant, now we are harvesting the lowermost leaves.

Q. What kind of tobacco do you grow?

LH: Only flue-cured tobacco [no *tendu* or similar leaves].

Q. How long has your family grown tobacco?

⁵⁴ Tobacco Market. 2017 Tobacco Industry Main Operational Indicators [in Chinese]. Published January 16, 2018. <http://www.etmoc.com/look/Statslist?Id=38139>.

⁵⁵ Most young farmers in Yunnan can speak Mandarin.

LH: My grandfather grew rice in the collective farms; my father grew rice, but started growing tobacco when I was a child. Now we only grow tobacco in this field.

Q. How much land do you cultivate?

LH: 40 mu, about half for tobacco [6.5 acres].

Q. How much tobacco do you have to give the government?

LH: 150 kg per mu, and the government gives half the price of fertilizers and pesticides.

Q. Do you have to borrow from other moneylenders?

LH: No.

Q. Are you familiar with the efforts of non-governmental organizations to shift cultivation from tobacco to other crops like corn?

LH: Yes, but we have decided not to make the shift.

Q. Why?

LH: It is true that tobacco is harder and costlier to grow, but it brings enormous profits. Last year I earned close to 1,40,000 RMB from my field [about USD \$20,000]. No other crop could remotely approach that figure.

Lu Han's interview was chosen as representative because most other farmers shared his situation (see methodological discussion below). Compared with the interviews conducted in Jharkhand, India, some differences are notable:

- a) The average sizes of the plots of land on which tobacco was grown were larger than in India. This observation holds only for the two interviewed groups.
- b) Only Virginia flue-cured tobacco is grown, unlike the site in India, where *tendu* was being grown side by side with Virginia tobacco.

- c) The social tensions and divisions present in India are largely absent, mainly due to the lack of indebtedness and state support in the form of investment in exchange for revenue.

6.2 *Methodological Discussion*

Because we have used LH's interview as a representative sample of 15 interviews, we provide here some more data to put these observations in context.

- All 15 people interviewed owned land between 35 and 45 mu; 12 devoted half of their land to tobacco, while 3 devoted less than half of their land to tobacco.
- All 15 grew Virginia flue-cured tobacco and had similar yields per hectare.
- None had any form of indebtedness.

We recognize that this sample size is small, and the conclusions must be understood as counterpoints to India rather than fully representative of the situation in China.

In sum, then, it appears that colonial patterns of landholding and indebtedness has continued in India, while tobacco farmers in China appears to be supported by the state in terms of investment in seeds and fertilizers.

7. Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

This report emphasizes two aspects about the historical roots of the current problem of tobacco in India and China. First, the circulation of capital – of the East India Company (1813-1858) and private European companies (1840-1920) between colonial India and the Qing Empire – set the foundation for tobacco cultivation in India. Second, the landholding pattern and moneylending relations of tobacco cultivation in India, unlike in China, are inheritances of colonial rule to a great extent. Analyzing this history can help us understand how global processes of capital expansion and trade are related to local social structures of production and circulation.

This report aimed more to outline suggestions for further research than to come to final conclusions; further research is required particularly to address the gaps that came up during our research. For instance, to what extent is the complexity of landholdings in tobacco a product of colonial rule in India? How do landholding patterns vary among the various tobacco-producing regions of India, such as West Bengal, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh? Second, what have been the regional differences in terms of the links with China? Third, how do local moneylending patterns interact with capital investment in the present day? Were the social relations of debt an inheritance of colonial rule, and how have these relations changed over time if at all and how do they impact tobacco production or the shift to alternative livelihoods?

The focus for this report has been primarily to see tobacco as a crop rather than cigarettes/*bidis*/*gutkha* as products. This is partly because the colonial state was more invested in growing raw materials to aid manufacturers in England than encouraging manufacturing in India. In other words, we have tried to see tobacco as an agricultural product, rather than a manufactured commodity. Our future research will elaborate further on the manufacture of smoked and smokeless tobacco in India vis-a-vis the colonial state. Finally, what have been the origins and cultures of consuming tobacco in India? This report has been entirely built around tobacco production and circulation, and therefore further research will need to be oriented toward consumption.

8. Acknowledgments

Asia Public History Foundation would like to thank the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World for the scoping grant, which made this research possible. The grant team and team of experts provided constant support and guidance. We also thank our research assistants in India and China for help with conducting interviews, and we express deep gratitude to all librarians and archivists who have provided us with incomparable help in tracking documents.

Note: Any opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors only and are not necessarily endorsed by FSFW. Copyright remains with the authors. The authors can proceed, without further FSFW permission, to publish this paper, or any revised version of it, in outlets such as journals, books, and other publications.

9. Bibliography

Archives

India

National Archives of India, New Delhi

Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi

West Bengal State Archives, Kolkata

Uttarpara Jaykrishna Library, Kolkata

Assam State Archive, Guwahati

Jharkhand State Archive, Ranchi

Japan

Murai Archives, Kyoto

National Archives of Japan, Tokyo

United States of America

New York Public Library

Bangladesh

National Archives of Bangladesh, Dhaka

China

National Archives of China, Beijing

Yunnan Provincial Archives, Kunming

United Kingdom

British Library, London

National Archives, Kew

Bristol Public Library

Published Sources

- Ali, Tariq Omar. 2018. *A Local History of Global Capital: Jute and Peasant Life in the Bengal Delta*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bagchi, Amiya Kumar. 1972. *Private Investment in India 1900-1939*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Baker, Christopher. 1981. "Economic Reorganization and the Slump in South and Southeast Asia." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, no. 3: 325-349.
- Bayly, C.A. 1983. *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bayly, C.A. 1989. *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Beckert, Sven. 2014. *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*. New York: Vintage.
- Benedict, Carol. 2011. *Golden Silk-Smoke: A History of Tobacco in China, 1550-2010*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bose, Sugata. 1993. *Peasant Labor and Colonial Capital*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bose, Sugata, and Jalal, Ayesha. 2018. *Modern South Asia*. 4th ed. London: Routledge.
- Brandt, Allan M. 2007. *The Cigarette Century: The Rise, Fall and Deadly Persistence of the Product that Defined America*. New York: Basic Books.
- Brook, Timothy. 1998. *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Buck, John Lossing. 1982. *Chinese Farm Economy*. New York: Garland, 1982.
- Cai Jiawan. 1826. "Yanpu" (Notes on Tobacco). *Baimeishan fangji shang shu*. n.p., 1826.
- Chao, Yüan-ling. 2009. *Medicine and Society and in Late Imperial China: A Study of Physicians in Suzhou, 1600-1850*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Cochran, Sherman. 1980. *Big Business in China: Sino-Foreign Rivalry in the Cigarette Industry, 1890-1930*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Das Gupta, Ashin. 2001. *The World of the Indian Ocean Merchant, 1500-1800*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Enstad, Nan. 2018. *Cigarettes, Inc.: An Intimate History of Corporate Imperialism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fay, Peter Ward. 1974. *The Opium War 1840-1842*. Durham, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Ferrari, Fabrizio M. 2011. *Health and Religious Rituals in South Asia: Disease, Possession and Healing*. London: Routledge.

Gokhale, B.G. 1974. "Tobacco in Seventeenth-Century India." *Agricultural History* 48, no. 4: 484-492.

Mintz, Sidney. 1985. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin Books.

Moreland, W.H., ed. 1931. *Relations of Golkonda in the Early Seventeenth Century*. London: Hakluyt Society.

Mukundaram. 1996. *Kabikāṅkaṇa Chandi*. Kolkata: Ananda Publishers.

Reid, Anthony. 2015. *A History of Southeast Asia: Critical Crossroads*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.

Sen, Tansen. 2017. *India, China, and the World: A Connected History*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.

Shi, Zhihong. 2017. *Agricultural Development in Qing China: A Quantitative Study, 1661-1911*. Leiden: Brill.

Sharma, Jayeeta. 2011. *Empire's Garden: Assam and the Making of India*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Subrahmanyam, Sanjay. 1990. *The Political Economy of Commerce: Southern India 1500 to 1650*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Trocki, Carl A. 1990. *Opium and Empire: Chinese Society in Colonial Singapore, 1800-1910*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.