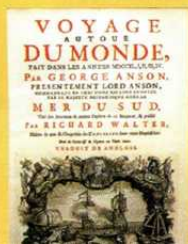


Asia in Those Days — A Glimpse into the Past

The Social Life of Europeans in Asia from the 16th through the 19th Centuries

Thomas Brandt

Early European life in Asia is illustrated by way of some 450 visual images consisting of photographs, lithographs and copper and steel engravings, each worth a thousand words. Complementing these images with more than 150 extracts from historical travel reports and clippings from the first English language newspapers published by Europeans in Asia the book provides a fascinating glimpse into Those Days in the Far East.



The book includes more than 150 clippings from early English language newspapers published by Europeans in Asia



"... it is possibly typical of that age that when 'Mr G. danced three times with Miss H.' at one party it was considered here equal to a proposal and a half." Quoted from a letter of E. Eden, British Lady who went out to India in 1835.

"a girl's reputation was gone if she were not returned to her parents by her partner as soon as each dance was over"



Treating the Ladies to a ride, India, 1828

"At these places, after five and before seven o'clock in the afternoon, crowds of carriages may be seen, and ladies seated enjoying the cool breeze - 80° and gilded bachelors leaning elegantly over the carriage sides, and entertaining the occupants with the latest fashionable chit-chat." SLEEPY SKETCHES 1877 (117)



The small European community with its lavish gatherings, stylish banquets and enchanting dinner dances gave perfect and fabulous opportunities to "feed" and nourish the flow of gossip.



The Empress of China, Plucking Mulberry Leaves Leipzig, Germany, undated. Mulberry leaves provided sustenance for the silk worm and silk was one of the most important trade products in Those Days. In ancient times silk production in China was controlled by the Emperor of China and cultivated by his women. In the days of European discovery Chinese silk became an essential link in the trade with Asia.

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Batavia 1907

Thomas Brandt, the author, is Deputy General Manager of the Malaysian - German Chamber of Commerce, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. His first book "Kunci Budaya - Business in Indonesia. The Cultural Key to Success" became a bestseller both in German and in English. His second book, the renowned "Asia Comic" provides amusing insights on today's expatriate life in Asia. The current publication completes the historical sight of expatriate life in the tropics.

LIMITED EDITION

In Germany: Fax ++49-4531-886138
 goasia Verlag, Tegeleck 19, D-23843 Bad Oldesloe
<http://www.io.com/goasia>, e-mail: goasia@io.com

In Indonesia:
 Fax: ++62-21-3155276, Tel: 3154685
 German Indonesian Chamber of Commerce, EKONID
 Jakarta 10031

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ISBN 3-00-007014-1
 Price Euro 124, DFL 275*, US \$ 120*, Aust \$ 202*, Sin \$ 221*,
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INTRODUCTION

SPICES

DISCOVERY JOURNEYS

CROWN AND COMPANIES IN EUROPEAN-ASIAN TRADE

EARLY MAPS TO DISCOVER THE EAST

THE SEA JOURNEY

PIRATES

TRADE WINDS

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

THE SUEZ CANAL

THE LANDING

LAND ROUTE TO ASIA

THE 19TH CENTURY: OVERSEAS TRAVEL BECAME POPULAR.

EARLY STATIONS & SETTLEMENTS IN THE EAST

RESIDENCES & HOTELS

CLIMATE & HEALTH

FOOD & DRINKS

RELIGION

SERVANTS & COOLIES

TRADE

COMMERCIAL DISTRICT STREET SCENES

FINANCE & MONEY

LAW

MILITARY LIFE

THE "COLONEL" AND THE "NABOB"

EARLY POSTAL SERVICES TO THE EAST

FIRST NEWSPAPERS IN ASIAN SETTLEMENTS

EARLY FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION

SOCIAL LIFE

SPORT

OPIUM

SMOKING THE WATER-PIPE

THEATRE & MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

CLUB LIFE

EUROPEAN WOMEN IN THE EAST

PICNICS

AFTERNOON TEA IN TROPICAL GARDENS

TO PAY A VISIT & THE COFFEE SHOP

THE AFTERNOON PROMENADE

DINNER PARTIES & EVENING ENTERTAINMENT

INDIA

CHINA

HONGKONG

SINGAPORE

NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES

GOING HOME



LIFE ABOARD

Navigation techniques and the condition of the ship were crucial to the success of the voyage. Poor navigation could bring the whole voyage into risk and by extension, the huge investment. This was a major concern for the captain.

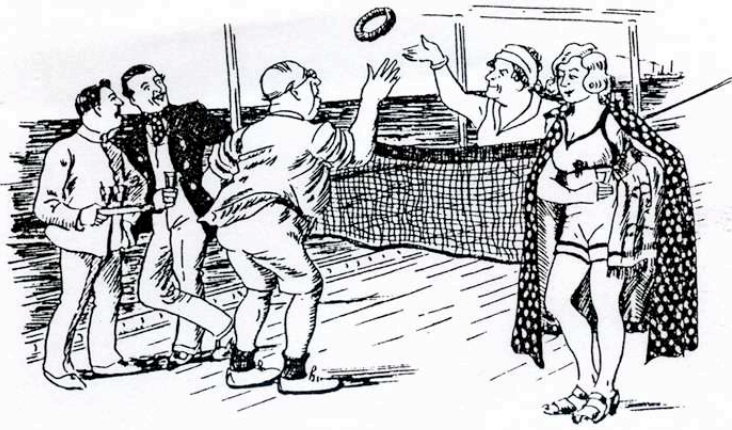
ACCOMMODATIONS: NICELY FURNISHED CABINS OR BETWEEN CANNONS

The sailors, who made up more than half of the ship's population, had to live and sleep between the cannons. Hence, there was no space to dry wet clothes. The cook, the steward, and other passengers were accommodated in cabins. Officers and merchants were also accommodated in cabins.



Crossing the Channel in less than pleasant conditions, 1816.

At the beginning of the sea journey the English Channel was much feared due to its narrow and shallow waters and strong westerly winds, which



"The only way to travel is by British liners, because of the lovely organised games"

(unlike the flashy Italian ships of which a lady said, "nothing but floating night-clubs I call them")



"... this task was chivalrously undertaken by young officers from the garrison"



"'Sweat the sex out of you' was the watchword"



"a girl's reputation was gone if she were not returned to her parents by her partner as soon as each dance was over"

PROMENADING IN CALCUTTA, THE "CITY OF THE PALACES"

The Mall, the Rotten Row of Calcutta, is quite unique; and in its own style, I should say, unsurpassed ...

Closed to the road are moored fine ships from all parts of the world, of many thousand tons burden, while the opposite bank is green with foliage throughout the year ...

Parallel to the carriages ... figure the riders; and the amount of salutation rendered necessary by this proximity is destructive to the brims of many hats. The Fort, of which the Maidan forms the "glacis", is half-way down the drive; officers are obliged to appear in uniform, and this, in conjunction with the varied costumes of the natives of all descriptions, affords a combination of colour which makes the whole scene very striking.

I once had occasion to take a young American girl, who had got thus far on a journey round the world from New York via San Francisco, to this promenade, and she told me it impressed her more pleasingly than anything she had hitherto seen.

Here too, on the hot May evenings, all the linger to catch the latest breath of the southerly breeze, which comes up from the sea ...

Life In The Mofussil, London 1878 (38f).



Calcutta the "City of Palaces"

CLUB LIFE



Postprandial Scene at Manila, 1857.

"Postprandial enjoyment is the true representation of the *dolce per niente* of fraternal residents in Manila. You will please to observe in the illustration that our positions are not studied; likewise, that we combine ease and pleasure - the rocking-chair of America, the noble invention of that inventive brother of ours, and the still more luxurious Chinese bamboo armchair; that perfection of human ingenuity in the finding out of a perfect chair. Tell me, after that, the Chinese are not a great people! Never sit in one of these chairs without blessing the whole Chinese race, except Yeh. Look at the lower part, that pulls out without your having to get up; look at that wondrous elongation of the arm to rest your legs upon! The windows are open - jostick burrs in his boat - coffee is on the table - weeds in our mouths. I'm awfully afraid if the *Lancet* hears of our smoking we shall get a wiggling, as we certainly exceed two cigars a day. Don't tell them, for goodness sake! They'll be down upon us like falling stars."

THE NORTH-CHINA HERALD.

MAY 22 1922

THE WOMAN'S PAGE

NEW WAYS OF SERVING CHICKEN AND DUCK

Out here in China we are fortunate in being able to secure chicken and duck at reasonable rates whenever we wish and perhaps just on that account we weary of our blessings. Housekeepers in the interior may be especially glad to have some different modes of preparing the domestic birds.

CHICKEN A LA MARIPOSA.

Cut up two tender chickens into small joints, put half a cupful of vegetable oil into a large frying pan; when hot, put in the pieces of chicken and fry them over a quick fire, adding one bay leaf, one clove and a small onion. Season to taste with salt, pepper and powdered nutmeg. When the pieces are slightly brown on both sides remove the bay leaf, clove and onion; pour off part of the oil, add one tablespoonful of finely chopped onion and half a clove of garlic; fry a few minutes longer, then add half a cupful of stock or water, one cupful of brown sauce, one cupful of tomato sauce and two sliced pickled walnuts; cover and simmer for twenty minutes.

Fry in hot oil as many fresh eggs as may be required, allowing one to each person; drain them, place the chicken in pyramidal form on a hot platter, pour over some of the sauce, place the eggs round the chicken, garnish with small pieces of fried bread or pastry and serve hot.

FRIED CHICKEN, SPANISH STYLE.

Prepare and cut a two-pound chicken into small pieces and sprinkle it with salt and white pepper. Put two tablespoonfuls of vegetable oil into a frying pan, add one slice of garlic and one rounded green pepper cut in small pieces. When the garlic turns brown take it out, put the chicken in, fry until brown, and three tomatoes, peeled and sliced, then cover closely and let simmer until done. Place the chicken on a hot platter, garnish with small corn croquettes, and serve very hot.

DUCKLING WITH PINEAPPLE.

Dress a duckling and stuff it with a bread forcemeat nicely seasoned with herbs. Roast in a moderate oven until ready, basting it with butter underneath. Drain one can of sliced pineapple. Melt two tablespoonfuls of butter substitute in a saucepan over the fire, stir in two tablespoonfuls of flour, add half a cupful of

the pineapple juice and one cupful of stock or water, stir until boiling, cook for five minutes, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Place the duckling on a hot platter, surround with the pineapple slices and serve one slice with each portion.

CHICKEN IN OYSTERS.

Roast a fine chicken in the usual way and put it aside to cool. Then cut eight small rounds from the breast, remove the bone of the meat and chop it fine. Pound this meat well, season with salt and pepper, add half a cupful of thick, white sauce and rub the whole through a sieve. Now add half a cupful of melted butter jelly and half a cupful of whipped cream or whipped evaporated milk.

Cut off about one-third from the top of eight small oysters, remove the centre without breaking the shell, fill these shells with the chicken omelet, and place in the refrigerator.

Melt one tablespoonful of butter in a saucepan, add one cupful of hot water and cook. Peel two oranges, break into the natural divisions, remove the seeds, and place in a cool oven to dry a little. Cool and slip in the cooled liquid. Arrange three of these round the top of the orange slices, and in the centre of them place one of the thumb of the breast. Serve garnished with parsley.

BROWNED DUCK WITH TURNIPS.

Truss two small or one large duck the same as for roasting and partly roast it in a hot oven. Let cool, remove, and cut into neat joints. Pour two cupfuls of brown sauce into a steamer, add the pieces of duck and three turnips, peeled and quartered and previously fried in a little hot fat. Season with salt, pepper and paprika, add half a cupful of apple juice and simmer for twenty-five minutes. Serve hot, garnished with toasted bread croutons. A few stoned olive may be added if liked.

CHICKEN FILLETS WITH OYSTERS.

Remove the breast from a large chicken, take off the skin and flatten the meat. Cut each fillet in two, trim them a little, and place one oyster in the centre of each slice of fillet. Season lightly with salt, pepper and lemon juice, and roll each fillet in oiled paper or a small paper bag. Place them in a greased pan, pour in a little stock or water and cook them in a moderate oven for 20 minutes. Remove the paper, place the fillets on a hot dish and cover with a nicely seasoned white sauce. Serve

MAY 20, 1922.

THE NORTH-CHINA HERALD.

ATTRACTIVE DISHES

The Unexpected Guest and How to Feed Him

Now that the first warm days are luring people out into the country some out-of-town hostesses are wondering how best to provide for guests who "drop in" near meal-times. Needless to say that hospitality is a delight and informal entertaining a particular pleasure, but it is as annoying to prepare a hot tiffin for the extra guests who do not appear as not to have enough for those who do. Hence those cold dishes which may be prepared beforehand and which will for the most part be available for the next day's menu if not requisitioned for the week-end are suggested.

A Well-made Potato Salad.

Cut thin slices, circular as the base of the dinner plates, of a rolled and spiced round of beef, or long slices off a brick of cold pressed beef; put with it a slice of tongue or ham, and pour over both a thin sheet of well-flavoured aspic jelly. Some attractive bits of lettuce on watercress and a radish or two should be cut into slices and imprisoned in the jelly.

Alternatively—some pieces of boiled chicken white in béchamel, on a moussé made of their own less delicate parts, with, perhaps, some purée of foie gras, with pale aspic and cold green beans, peas, or quarters of tomato for a garnish; or, best of all, with the half of an American pickled peach and some salad.

Cold ducks stuffed with moussé, cold chickens stuffed with made savoury with tomato mignonette, or an uncut leg of mutton round with little jelly of mint sauce made with aspic chopped mint—these, together with a bowl of well-made potato will deprive the visitor's bell of its terrors.

Potato Salad.—Take kids the most waxy potatoes obtain, boil in their skins, peel while cut into thickish slices, pour tablespoonfuls of vinegar and another of oil, and gradually add salt to taste; add two tablespoonfuls of some pepper and salt to taste, one small finely chopped onion, let it all stand for an hour serving. A very thin mayonnaise sauce with a little French mustard and a drop or two of garlic oil and a few capers with parsley chives may be used as an alternative dressing.

This cold Moussé of White Lobster (for six) is nice against warm weather luncheon dishes. Boil two good-sized whiting when cold pass through a sieve with a little cold salmon and put it into a basin with pepper, cream, and half a pint of liquid aspic jelly. Line a shaped or Charlotte mould with aspic; when set, put in a few lobster cut in small pieces, half fill with the fish moussé, another layer of lobster, and the mould with the rest of the pour over a layer of aspic, and so on. Turn out and serve with cucumber and beetroot salad, with green sandwich brown bread and butter and a bit of mayonnaise sauce.

insult; in short she stopped at nothing that met her fancy, however wild or eccentric, executing whatever she attempted with a naiveté and ease and elegance that was irresistible. Mrs. Bristow was clearly a hundred and twenty years before her time." *Standford, Ladies in the Sun ... India 1790-1860, 1962. (p 83f)*

"This evening a fine-looking old Dutch lady, owner of a large property in this part of the country, drove up her four spirited ponies, and, striding into the veranda where we sat, grasped my hand and welcomed us to Java in vigorous Dutch - the ugliest of European languages. She sat in a rocking-chair attired in a gaily-coloured sarong (long kilt) and white bed-gown, with no stockings on, only smart slippers, and no covering on her neatly-dressed grey hair, giving us an account of how, on her way to a mountain farm a short time ago with a large sum of money, her carriage was attacked by brigands, whom she, jumping out and laying about vigorously with her four-in-hand whip, dispersed, and then drove on her team triumphantly! Pretty well for a widow lady aged sixty?" Bridges 1883, (243f)

THE ROLE OF NATIVE WOMEN

Europeans were curious in observing the role of local women in Asian societies. Their travel reports were full of comments on practices of early marriages, polygamous habits, etc. The custom of sati in India involved condemning the wives to burn themselves on the pyre with their husbands; this custom had been introduced to discourage the poisoning of husbands by wives.

ON THE SATI CUSTOM IN INDIA

"... also that with him his wives had to jump alive into the fire ... that when a man dies, he will get burned in a pit with delicious smelling wood and oils. His women left behind will get the choice, if they like to eat."

WAITING FOR THE "TRADE WINDS"

Sailing from Europe was organized according to a fixed schedule following the prevailing winds, the so called "trade winds". Frequently, passengers had to wait for weeks or months until the right winds allowed them to bid adieu to the shores of home. During the journey, ships had to sail time-consuming roundabout courses in order to get the "wind into the sail".

Reaching the destination within the expected time frame, therefore, became a difficult task which depended on mastering the best sailing season for each region. The Atlantic and Indian oceans involved especially difficult passages. On the outward voyage, departures from Europe were scheduled in time to enter the Indian Ocean by the end of June or early July, in order to catch the "west monsoon" blowing eastwards from the Cape of Good Hope. Almost all Portuguese vessels between the years 1500 to 1635 left Portugal between March and April, to reach the Indian Ocean on time Hodges 1793 (10). Correspondingly, ships of the Scandinavian East India Companies from northern Europe had to leave Europe earlier than English or Dutch ships, due to the increased distance they had to sail.

MONSOONS DETERMINE SAILING TIMES

In Asia, waiting times were even more important due to dependence on monsoon winds. The year is clearly divided in two seasons, wet and dry, corresponding to the west and east monsoons. During the west monsoon, starting in June the only travelling direction is eastwards towards the Spice Islands. This period of the year is famous for heavy rains and violent storms. By November the prevailing winds have changed direction with the east monsoon steadily blowing ships westwards towards home. The west monsoon lasted until October and was noted for its dry weather, brilliant skies and constant sunshine. In between these two seasons, the winds changed unpredictably.

MONSOON WINDS FOUNDED SETTLEMENTS AND SET PRICES

Merchants and passengers were often forced to wait for up to half a year for suitable "trade winds". These winds influenced trade between Europe and Asia and had a significant bearing on spice prices in Europe. The monsoons determined the selection of certain waiting places which gained in popularity and became settlements. Among these was Singapore, located at the hub of the trading routes leading to China and the Spice Islands.

The "trade winds" were not the only criterion in determining the duration of a vessel's stay in the Eastern settlements. Departure times also depended on the ability to purchase a full cargo of goods at local markets. Therefore, European merchants were interested in arriving as early as possible, before their competitors turned up. Purchasing the cargo quickly was crucial to securing an immediate return voyage with the next change of the monsoon. In later centuries more and more ships successfully engaged in inter-Asian trade and remained for several years in the region. The ones that returned to Europe often sailed in fleets to protect valuable cargoes.

DURATION OF THE JOURNEY AND STOPOVER PORTS

Early voyages to the East took years. The length of time involved directly affected the supply of provisions and the loss of crew through illness and death. In the 15th and 16th centuries, ships were away for two to three years before they returned to Europe. Even at the beginning of the 17th century, it still took an average of 120 to 180 days to reach the East Indies. This average travel time doubled or tripled in some cases, and on occasion there was no return at all. By comparison, the sea route to the "West Indies", today's South America, took around 60 days. With the start of the steamship age and the opening of the Suez Canal, the passage was reduced to 45 days, and eventually to as little as two weeks.